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DECEMBER 9, 1968 35 cents

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LIBERAL COMMUNISM

The Basic Dogma, the Scope for Freedom, the Danger in Optimism

C. P. SNOW

ONE NATION — CAN NIXON DO IT?

HOWARD L. REITER

AMERICAN HISTORY LESSONS

Alan Trachtenberg on Mailer's Miami & Chicago
Alexander Zucker on Lawrence & Oppenheimer
Christopher D. Stone on the Mooney-Billings Case

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LETTERS

at odds

New York City

DEAR SIRS: In the Nov. 11 issue of *The Nation,* you published my review of Robert McNamara's *The Essence of Security* under the grotesquely misleading title, "McNamara: The Glacial Technocrat." If whoever conceived that title had bothered to read the review, rather than hunting through it in search of a provocative phrase reflecting his or her political predilections, that title would have been an inconceivable choice. You will admit, I trust, that it suggests a perception of Mr. McNamara rather at odds with my conclusion that he was "easily the most admirable figure ever to have occupied . . . the office of the Secretary of Defense." . . .

Tom J. Farer

New York City

DEAR SIRS: Tom Farer's eminently fair review of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara brought a smile to my face when he described one of the Secretary's "most attractive qualities" as "natural candor." . . . In a March 3, 1965, hearing of the House Appropriations Committee, McNamara was questioned on the escalation of the Vietnamese War:

> *McNamara*: The problem is one of semantics, I think. . . . What I call policy on the one hand and what I call tactics on the other, you might lump all under the head of policy. The basic policy is assistance to South Vietnam to maintain its independence. In that sense the policy has not changed at all. What I call tactics, which is the form of assistance and the pressure we apply militarily in support of that policy, has changed. A good illustration, I think, is the fact that within the past week or ten days we used U.S. piloted jet aircraft against the Viet Cong in South Vietnam. *I do not call that a change of policy,* but it certainly is a change of equipment or weaponry or tactics, *whatever you want to call it.* There is no question but that is a change . . . a year ago we were not striking North Vietnam with U.S. aircraft or South Vietnamese aircraft . . . we've had several strikes, a total of perhaps six within five weeks. This is a change. The question is: *Is this a change of policy?* You, apparently, would say it is a change of policy. I would say the policy is constant, the tactics have changed. (Emphasis added.)

Morris Renek

credit

Carbondale, Ill.

DEAR SIRS: In "Moscow Is So Dull" (*The Nation,* Nov. 11), Desmond Smith quoted from my translation of Voznesensky and did not give me credit. . . . The quatrain in question:

> *An artist firstborn*
> *Is always a tribune.*
> *In him the spirit of overturning,*
> *And rebellion—eternal.*

comes from page 20 of *Voznesensky: Selected Poems,* authorized translation by Herbert Marshall; Hill & Wang, paperback edition.

Herbert Marshall

once upon a future

Newtonville, Mass.

DEAR SIRS: E. J. Mishan ["Abyss of Progress," *The Nation,* Nov. 4] argues in favor of restraining the application of scientific discoveries in order to slow down technological

(Continued on page 628)

EDITORIALS

Predictable and Preventable

The coal mine disaster at Consol No. 9 in Mannington, W. Va., was easily predictable and almost certainly preventable. Ever since federal inspectors have had the right to enter mines—that is, since 1941—not only has almost every mine disaster been predictable, it has actually been predicted. Last year only eighteen mines were free of statutory code violations, or one-third of 1 per cent of the mines. At Mannington, the mine lies over an oil and natural gas field and it had been posted as "extremely gassy" by federal inspectors in August. The miners themselves regarded it as "hot"—that is, known to be gassy and dangerous. The hazard was increased by the fact that the company was "pushing production"; it was working three shifts, producing 10,000 or more tons of coal a day.

There is also a high degree of probability that this particular disaster was preventable. No mine will ever be thoroughly safe; mining is inherently hazardous, the most hazardous of some forty major industries. Most of the deaths are from "accidents" befalling individual miners, not from major disasters. But the statistics of mine accidents show that they can be drastically reduced, if not eliminated, because that in fact is what has happened. The death toll, which was once as high as 2,000, is now down to 200 or so a year. However, in the entire history of hazardous occupations there is no parallel for the extent to which the coal mining industry has resisted the introduction of ways and means to prevent major disasters. The argument has been that, as an industry, coal mining operates at a low margin of profit and that safety devices and better prevention methods are expensive. But major mine disasters are enormously costly; the losses in the present disaster will run into the millions.

Few bosses, however, can match the mine owners for stubbornness and arrogance. For decades they argued that coal dust could not be ignited underground by sparks, etc. From the time the Bureau of Mines was established in 1911, at the initiative of the union (it was then actively concerned with safety), until 1941, no federal inspector had a right to enter a mine. He could make an inspection if the owner permitted, and he could file a report—which the owner could and generally did ignore.

On December 21, 1951, a frightful explosion in a mine at West Frankfort, Ill., took 119 lives. This disaster was reported to have been "absolutely preventable"; in the previous July two federal inspectors had posted the mine as hazardous (see editorial, *The Nation,* January 5, 1952, and "Murder in the Mines" by Willard Shelton, *The Nation,* February 9, 1952). In the aftermath of that tragedy, new legislation was adopted to give federal inspectors the right of inspection and, under certain circumstances, the power to shut down a mine. But it was not until 1966 that the so-called "small mines," those employing no more than fourteen miners, were brought within the purview of the act.

Federal inspectors are well-trained, experienced men, and West Virginia has perhaps better mine safety legisla-

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tion than any other state; still, inspection, enforcement and improvement lag far behind what could be regarded as satisfactory present-day standards. Lack of funds is a major shortcoming. At the time of the United Mine Workers convention this year in Denver, the President proposed new and more adequate mine safety legislation, but the proposal was so palpably political that no one took it seriously. In January, a new administration and a new Congress will take over; perhaps they will act, as the Eisenhower administration acted in 1952 after the West Frankfort disaster, to take the steps which are so obviously indicated.

But one cannot be sure. Coal mine disasters are a classic example of what might be called the "disappearing" news story. Few recurrent news stories are more dramatic or have a wider human interest. But once the headlines have subsided—once the fires have been extinguished and the bodies removed—the public is permitted to forget about coal mine disasters until the next one. Coal mines are located in areas off the beaten path; legislators from these areas in the House and Senate represent, for the most part, mine owners, not miners. The media have little occasion to focus on coal mining except when tragedy strikes.

What is needed is a sustained drive to keep public attention fixed on what is, and always has been, a national scandal. "The story of coal is always the same," wrote "Mother" Mary Harris Jones in her autobiography, "it is a dark story." And she knew, for she had spent thirty years of her life in West Virginia. "When I get to the other side," she said, "I shall tell God Almighty about West Virginia!" It is not West Virginia alone that she should report on today but the entire nation which, from its extraordinary susceptibility to journalistic distraction, fails to worry about mine safety between disasters, salving its conscience by ritualistic pity for the survivors during the high point of the drama, only to forget them the day after the mass funeral.

The Campus Ombudsman

The Swedish-Danish idea of a "citizens' protector" has caught on in the universities. In the November 11 *Chronicle of Higher Education* James W. Brann reports on a Detroit get-together of campus ombudsmen, of whom there are at present between twenty and thirty in the United States, with several dozen other institutions considering such positions. The mode of application varies widely: some ombudsmen are appointed by the university president, some by the faculty, some by the student body. The post may be a full-time job, or it may be administered part-time by a member of the teaching faculty. Some are kept busy, but a professor-ombudsman at a Montana college has had only a handful of cases in two years.

Opinions about the value of ombudsman mediation also vary. Earle W. Clifford, dean of student affairs at Rutgers, likens the appointment of an ombudsman to putting a penny in the fuse socket when a circuit blows. "A decision to go the ombudsman route," he says, "is a fine advertisement for the failure of an administration in general or a student personnel program in particular to meet responsi-

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The Nation is published weekly (except for omission of four summer issues) by the Nation Magazine Company and copyright 1968 in the U.S.A. by the Nation Associates, Inc., 333 Sixth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10014, Tel: CH 2-8400. West Coast office (for editorial correspondence only): 825 South Barrington Avenue, Los Angeles, Calif. 90049. Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing office.

Subscription Price: One year, $10; two years, $18. Add $1 per year postage for Canada; $2 for foreign.

Change of Address: It is essential that subscribers ordering a change of address give five weeks' notice and provide their old as well as their new address. Please give Zip Code numbers for both addresses.

Information to Libraries: The Nation is indexed in Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Book Review Digest, Book Review Index and the Public Affairs Information Service.

NATION *Volume 207 No. 20*

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bilities for equity and communication in an academic community."

Mr. Clifford agreed with some other speakers that the universities are due for radical change, and that often the faculties stand in the way: "I need a student government mobilized to play a part, with me, in rocking the faculty boat." Along the same line, Frank Lucatelli, who directs the student-run free university at the University of Detroit, advocates that students walk out of inadequately conducted classes and set up their own classes, to show administrators and faculty members "how a meaningful learning experience is created."

By its nature, the ombudsman remedy, whether at an institution of learning or in government, is a palliative. If those in charge were wise and unselfish, an ombudsman would not be needed, nor can the concept help materially in situations where radical reform is the only solution. Yet, within its limitations, it can avoid or resolve a certain number of painful and even dangerous conflicts.

Brann tells, for example, of an incident at San Jose State College where a Negro student walking in a corridor of a classroom building had his hat knocked off by a faculty member, who told him: "We don't wear our hats in here." The student was furious, as were other Negroes on the campus. The incident might have resulted in a major confrontation, since the college was already racially troubled. However, J. Benton White, the San Jose ombudsman, quickly cooled things off. The faculty member, it seems, had been knocking off students' hats for years to "teach them courtesy"; he apologized, and presumably has learned courtesy himself. In this single incident, the ombudsman may have earned his keep for the whole semester.

Many less dramatic instances can be cited, and there may be beneficial side effects. As Thomas F. Davis, a part-time ombudsman at the University of Detroit puts it, "The ombudsman is not the conscience of the university, but he makes it possible for a conscience to exist on the campus."

Snow's War

As his recent photographs show, C. P. Snow, with advancing years, grows to resemble Winston Churchill. This similarity adds emphasis to the fact that, twenty-two years after Sir Winston created the iron curtain image at Fulton, Mo., Lord Snow used the same platform of the John Findlay Green lecture at Westminster College last month to warn the world of a looming peril. He, too, referred to curtains; he said that we—meaning the prosperous nations of the West—"draw the curtains and take care not to listen to anything which is going on in the streets outside."

What is going on is man's lemming-like suicide by proliferation. This is not prophecy; it is happening now, according to the British novelist and scientist, and any day the evidence will be on our television screens. We—this time meaning the world at large—are in process of proving the mathematics of Malthus with our own emaciated corpses. Snow confesses himself to be in a state of despair, but as a man of reason he spurns despair, and offers a minimal prescription for stopping, if not reversing, the universal flood of population. First, the underdeveloped nations, and to only a somewhat lesser degree, the advanced nations, must determine to reduce their birth rates by major proportions. (This will be very difficult: Lord Ritchie-Calder has pointed out recently that the world is not staging an "orgy of procreation"; it is just that more children are surviving to have more children.) Next, the prosperous nations must contribute to the impoverished lands a percentage of their annual incomes that exceeds even what they have been able, or willing, to expend for self-defense in their days of greatest peril. And finally, the two superpowers—Russia and the United States—must collaborate to these ends.

It is on this third point that Lord Snow strikingly parts company with his distinguished predecessor at Fulton. Churchill, by coining the phrase, "iron curtain," did as much as a man can do with words to assure the waging of the cold war. It was the wrong war to fight, as both belligerents admit at least tacitly today, and it not only distracted attention from C. P. Snow's war (which even twenty-two years ago was already in train) but it made the logistics of that war the more baleful. Because when nations rattle the saber, they also rock the cradle—sons for the fatherland!

Not one nation has tried seriously to make its people understand what is meant by the statement—no longer subject to dispute—that at going rates the present world population will have doubled by the year 2000, and will double again in a still briefer span. It is a matter of debate whether the food supply can, even theoretically, keep pace with this inundation of flesh. And it is a matter of trivial debate, for the resources are finite and the end must come in a later decade, if it does not in an earlier. Moreover, long before that day, mankind will be reduced to the choices and enterprise of a dairy herd, each of us chewing his daily ration of synthetics on his allotted square yard of living space.

That is the doomsday against which C. P. Snow is fighting—with the resolute hope that a rational man employs when there is no choice but hope. He bids the world cease its petty battles—now—and close ranks, not against the invader from space but against our own fecundity.

Why Mercenaries?

Addressing the American Legion of Monroe County (New York) on November 11, the fiftieth anniversary of the veterans' organization, Dr. W. Allen Wallis, president of the University of Rochester, took a bold stand. "To be invited to participate with you today," he said with urbane irony, "is a pleasure which I am enjoying greatly, at least up to this point in the proceedings." With that, he launched into a devastating attack on the draft, calling for its abolition "immediately—with no ifs, ands, or buts."

Dr. Wallis' denunciation came with the more force because he is no pacifist. While admiring the "basic pacifism" of the American people, he feels—quoting Wendell Willkie ("only the strong can be free")—that it "is fraught

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with peril in the modern world." His attack on the draft system was therefore not on the ground that it is immoral in principle and inequitable in practice, but that its inefficiency menaces national security.

Ultimately most draftees make fair-to-middling soldiers, and a certain proportion are as good as they come. But their training is difficult and expensive, and the one desire of most of them is to get home. As for the inequities, at this stage they surely require no further demonstration. Consequently, Dr. Wallis would tolerate the draft only under conditions of total mobilization or an approach to it, as in World Wars I and II—a type of war which by every indication will never recur.

He dismisses "universal" military service on the ground that (assuming it was really universal) everyone would be equally mistreated, everyone being a chattel of the government. A lottery would be no more equitable than the present arrangement. Though there are some objections to an all-volunteer force, the advantages overweigh the drawbacks. Military pay would have to be raised, but the true cost would probably be less than under the draft, since more of the cost would be open and paid by the taxpayers, instead of being hidden, with a large part paid by the draftees.

Dr. Wallis notes that General Hershey and others have referred to volunteers as "mercenaries," "hired killers," and "in there just for the money." This is essentially a class argument; under the present system 90 per cent of the commissioned officers are volunteers, and no one calls them mercenaries. Dr. Wallis quotes Prof. Harry Gilman: "Why . . . are officers who are encouraged to enter and to remain in the service by reasonably high levels of pay called 'dedicated career men,' but privates who would volunteer when they too received higher levels of pay are called 'mercenaries'?"

Of course a still better solution would be the demilitarization of the United States, but since that is not an early prospect, Mr. Nixon (who has made some unspecific statements regarding the faults of the present system) should make abolition of the draft one of his first items of business.

Bowlful of Jelly

On November 24, and with President-elect Nixon in the congregation, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale preached a sermon in which, according to *The New York Times*, he asserted that "God doesn't want anyone to be hungry and oppressed. He just puts His big arms around everybody and hugs them up against Himself." This image of the Almighty as Santa Claus is no doubt appropriate to the season, but it is a perilous doctrine to serve up to a political leader already disposed to assign the nation's ghetto problems to the benevolence of free enterprise.

Upton Sinclair

Most of what needs to be said about Upton Sinclair will be said. The editorials will note his passion for social justice, his "awesome fecundity" as a writer, and his addiction to various fads and nostrums. It will be said that he was extraordinarily gracious and benign for a person who so consistently castigated the high and mighty, applying the verbal whip with such relish to institutions, persons and practices he found abhorrent.

The contrast between his rhetoric and his manner was indeed striking. What is not likely to be said is that, at a certain level, he had a talent for communication that was close to genius. To this day one can find the slogans of the EPIC campaign (End Poverty in California) scrawled on bridge approaches, rocks, abandoned barns and tree trunks in the most remote areas of the state. Sinclair's pamphlet of that title was the basic—indeed the only—document used in his remarkable race for governor of California in 1934. In previous campaigns he had run as a Socialist, but in 1934 he decided to enter the Democratic primary. A million or more unemployed were willing to listen to anyone, even a former Socialist, atheist and advocate of free love, who made some sense and offered a little hope. Sinclair set out to convince the people of the state that poverty was not part of the natural order of the universe and that it could be ended.

He spoke from one end of the state to the other, at every imaginable kind of meeting, and he spoke with incandescent brilliance. What he said was simplistic, naive, unrealistic, but on the basic proposition he was so obviously right that he could not be refuted. Those with eyes to see knew that thousands of tons of foodstuffs were being regularly destroyed, in a misguided effort to sustain market prices. Citrus growers sprayed tons of fruit with oil in huge dumps protected by barbed wire—to prevent the poor from stealing a few oranges. In 1934 the notion that poverty could be ended was not so much a radical idea as it was utterly novel. Sinclair, the teacher, the superb educator, made his point. His handling of questions from his audiences was beyond praise. He was quiet, deft, smiling, never condescending, always direct and responsive; he never failed to communicate.

As an effort in mass education through political means the EPIC campaign was a great success. Sinclair was supported by an army of rank amateurs; Eugene McCarthy's affluent "volunteers" were political sophisticates by comparison. A key to Sinclair's success was that there really had not been a Democratic Party in California, in any meaningful sense, for decades. When the EPIC campaign was over, there was a new, largely rank-and-file, Democratic organization. Scores of prominent politicians, some still in office, came out of the EPIC movement. Sinclair's defeat, incidentally, was not due to the smear campaigns directed against him, or the wild quotes from his books and pamphlets, or the systematic attempts to panic the voters. He won the Democratic nomination and might well have been elected, but for the fact that a respected progressive, Raymond Haight, entered the race as the nominee of the old Progressive Party and polled enough votes to defeat Sinclair. But a more basic reason is that Upton had lost interest in the governorship long before the votes were counted. He had lived it all in his imagination; there was no need to experience it.

Sinclair was not a great novelist or social critic; he was a master of communication techniques, a remarkable

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pamphleteer, educator and speaker. He didn't think—he saw, he had visions. As a muckraker he lacked Lincoln Steffens' remarkable insight and analytic powers; for the most part he communicated indignation, not understanding. He kept to the surface and lived on first impressions.

All who knew him liked him. Those who knew him best were endlessly baffled by the strange and contradictory elements that made him the kind of person he was; at the same time, they were full of admiration for his qualities and talents.

ONE NATION — CAN NIXON DO IT?

HOWARD L. REITER

Mr. Reiter, a doctoral candidate in political science at Harvard, is on the executive board of the Cambridge chapter of the Ripon Society, a national organization of liberal Republicans.

On the night when he accepted his second Presidential nomination, Richard Nixon told the Miami Beach convention that "a party that can unite itself will unite America." The events in Chicago three weeks later gave his words new significance, and he reiterated the theme throughout the campaign. Now he must deliver on his pledge.

Can Richard Nixon unite America? The odds are mixed. They begin with his popular vote, embarrassingly small for a man who presents himself as a unifying force. Of course, the other Presidents who began their administrations in a similar predicament, Lincoln and Wilson, were quite effective in office. But both had working Congressional majorities, and Mr. Nixon does not. In one sense, however, he may have an advantage that Hubert Humphrey would have lacked: he may be able to rely on the great bulk of his co-partisans in Congress to support his program, and then hope to attract Democrats looking for half a loaf. That was the strategy Dwight Eisenhower employed for eight years, and it generally worked. But Eisenhower was able to use his enormous popularity and prestige in this endeavor; Richard Nixon will have neither great popularity nor great prestige at his disposal.

Mr. Nixon throughout his career has dealt in the currency of partisanship, and the next four years may provide him with something of a cultural shock. For he should apprise himself of the fact that the bonds of party have been steadily loosening in the last twenty years, and are now close to atrophy. Perhaps declining partisanship is a sign of our post-industrial times, and will persist far into the future. More likely, it is a sign of a realignment in party politics, a change strikingly similar to that described by Joel H. Silbey in *The Transformation of American Politics, 1840-1860*:

> The political change of the ante-bellum period was the outgrowth of changing conditions in American life and the failure of the traditional parties to cope with these changes adequately. . . . Ultimately, as these issues became more salient, that is, more important to them, several of the groups shifted politically in order to restore the necessary conditions for maximizing their satisfactions. Concern over these issues was powerful enough to weaken the strongest of traditional partisan loyalties.

Jusp, Wir Brunckenbauer (Switzerland)

Will His Reach Be Long Enough?

The strains on the present party system probably reflect a similar kind of shift in the salient issues. As Edward Schneier has cogently argued in *The Nation* ("The New Tide of National Politics," January 22, and "The Scar of Wallace," November 4), this change is most likely one from economic issues to status issues—those relating to the comparative position of groups in the society. They include race relations, crime control, anti-intellectualism, local versus centralized control of societal institutions.

Whether or not we are headed for a major realignment, the waning effect of party on the political scene cannot be denied. In the Gallup Poll, the proportion of self-styled "independents" has been rising dramatically since 1940, and now exceeds that of Mr. Nixon's party. Voting patterns reflect this trend: in 1946, of twenty-four states which held simultaneous gubernatorial and Senatorial elections, only one elected a Democrat to one office and a Republican to the other. Since that time, the number of states with split outcomes has risen steadily, and in 1964, 1966 and 1968, an outright majority of those states simultaneously electing a governor and a Senator so divided. In Presidential election years, there has been an almost identical increase in the incidence of states voting for the Presidential candidate of one party and state-wide office seekers of the other. In this connection, the voters of Arkansas deserve some kind of accolade this year for bestowing their electoral favors upon George Wallace, J. William Fulbright and Winthrop Rockefeller.

Congressional party ties have also slackened. The measure of party unity compiled each year by the *Congressional Quarterly* has gradually declined for both parties, in both houses of Congress, since the journal began its studies in the late 1940s. Even Lyndon Johnson's masterful lead-

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ership of the Senate Democrats during the Eisenhower years did not arrest this trend. Today, there is not one party leader in Congress who can marshal his forces in every major legislative contest. On a number of key issues, such as the Powell expulsion and the Fortas nomination, various "leaders" have actually changed their positions to accommodate their "followers." There are signs of atrophy in the old folkways, too, as freshman Senators are playing a more important role than ever before. The spectacle of a Percy housing bill or a Griffin fight against Abe Fortas would have been unthinkable a few years ago.

What all this means to Richard Nixon is that he cannot rely on party labels to guarantee him a bloc of support, a bloc of opposition, or legislative leaders who can deliver the votes. For purposes of both popular and Congressional coalition building, he must present his program on its merits, and expect support and opposition to develop on that basis. That suggests the distinct possibility of new and perhaps even lasting party coalitions. The disadvantages inherent in a state of party flux go hand in hand with enormous new opportunities.

These new opportunities begin with an anomaly. Throughout the long and hectic campaign, Richard Nixon's standing in the polls varied hardly a percentage point. Hubert Humphrey's dramatic last-minute gains were at the expense of George Wallace and the previously undecided bloc. This raises the intriguing likelihood that a sizable majority of Americans never even considered voting for Nixon and a quite large minority never considered anyone else. It is the price one pays for being highly controversial, and it does not augur well for the Republicans in 1972. In short, Nixon must break out of the 43 per cent bloc, who will probably support him whatever he does, and construct the new majority he has been promising his party.

How this can be done is by no means clear. Viewing his 1960 campaign in retrospect in *Six Crises*, Nixon wrote:

> Had I lost by two million votes, or more, no one could say "if you had just done this or that you would have won." But when a shift of ten or twelve thousand votes in three or four key states would have overturned the result, anyone could make a pretty good case for the proposition—"if only you had taken my advice, you would have won."

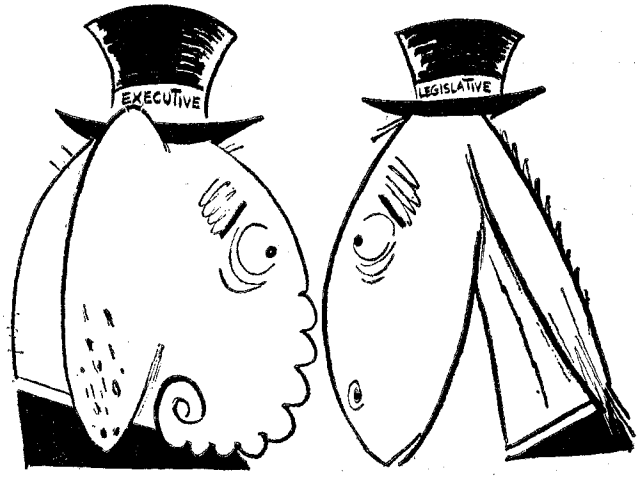
The same analysis can be applied in reverse to his 1968 campaign. If Strom Thurmond, John Tower and Spiro Agnew can claim that their hard line on law and order provided the winning electoral votes, Midwestern moderates like Richard Ogilvie, William Saxbe and Warren Knowles can take credit for the victory, too. All of them ran ahead of Nixon in their states. This is a critical matter, for Nixon's response to the choice will determine what kind of coalition he can assemble. If he is sufficiently perceptive, he knows that the law and order issue was a campaign gimmick that has been milked for almost all it is worth. The forty-five electoral votes won by George Wallace might conceivably be picked up by Nixon in 1972, but it could be at the cost of enough industrial states to insure defeat.

In the industrial states of the Northeast lies Nixon's greatest room for improvement. Of the region's 149 electoral votes he carried just twenty-seven. It was, furthermore, the only region in which his proportion of the two-party vote dropped below what he won in 1960. Surprisingly, his performance in the suburbs also fell, a fact noted by all three major newsweeklies. While some of that decline may be attributed to the Wallace vote, there is no question that Wallace drew support from both parties. (In New York, he did equally well in New York City, the suburbs and upstate.) This means that a good number of suburban Republicans switched to Humphrey.

This strayed suburban vote must be regained by the Republicans if Nixon is to serve with any hope of uniting the country and winning re-election. For these were the fence sitters through most of the campaign, and they are the least solid element of the Humphrey vote. They are white-collar or successful blue-collar employees, better educated and better off than most Americans; a large number of them were strongly attracted to the McCarthy and Rockefeller campaigns. While they may provide the margin of victory in the major industrial states in a given election, their numbers are less important than their influence —they are a kind of managerial, professional and intellectual elite, manning the institutions of business, scientific research, education and the mass media. They are, in short, the opinion leaders of American society.

How can this group be wooed? An obvious step would be to put a rapid end to the war in Vietnam, a war opposed in part because the sons of the middle class are now being sent to wage it. But the more basic issue is the domestic crisis, which does not lend itself to as easy a solution as the war. Nixon lacks the confidence of the suburban swing group, in part because he has failed to demonstrate a sincere and sophisticated concern for metropolitan problems. His conspicuous absence from the ghettos (and Agnew's flip bromides), his desire to limit federal aid, and his reliance on the rubric of law and order handicap him with those who fear for the future of the republic if the cities are not saved, and soon.

But there are surely those who are now telling Nixon that success depends upon appeals to the disgruntled members of the middle and lower-middle classes who desire



Ivey

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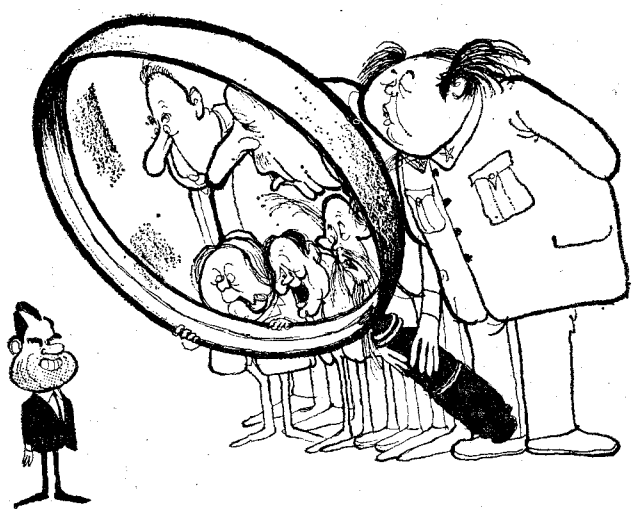
above all else a cut in federal poverty programs and an increase of law and order. Indeed, that is Nixon's own concept of the "forgotten man." Tempting as it must be for him to submit to this line of strategy, he must realize that this group, concentrated in small towns, ethnic enclaves, and parts of the blue-collar labor force, is on the wane in numbers and influence. (For the most part, too, it is Democratic in its leanings on economic issues.) A man from Yorba Linda, Calif., who has spent the last twenty years on the Republican chicken-dinner circuit, might come to think that these forgotten men comprise the vast majority of Americans. But the party that throws



King, Telegraph (Australia)

"Well?"

in its lot with them has embarked, demographically speaking, on a slowly sinking ship.

Indeed, what is needed, not only by Nixon but by all of us, is a proper perspective on the so-called law and order issue. It is not simply the race issue clouded in euphemism, for it has strong appeal in areas where black faces have never been seen. Nor is it merely a collection of the grievances of the "forgotten man." And it has precious little to do with crime prevention.

When men focus attention on "law" and "order," they are in effect reconsidering the fundamental premises of the political system. In this regard, it is fitting that the only Supreme Court decision in American history to play a major role in national politics was the Dred Scott decision, for it was part of a decisive national reconsideration of the nature of the American union. Likewise, the controversiality of the Warren court is derived from its role in the reconsideration of the basic relations of our society in the post-industrial period—black and white, rural and urban, police and accused, and so on. Its decisions in these areas have resulted in a natural inclination to lay blame for the turmoil at the door of the Court, and to overlook the fact that the Court's decisions constitute a symptom and not a cause of the changes. Dismay at these changes has led to a plaintive cry for obedience to law and preservation of order—the forgotten man wants to stop the world and throw the troublemakers off.

In short, we are entering a crisis of legitimacy, when a large segment of the population questions whether laws should protect impatient blacks, accused criminals, draft-card burners, campus rebels and alleged pornographers. Their frustration is partly due to a genuine sense of alienation from the nation's leaders—first from John Kennedy, who assembled a coalition almost the exact reverse of Nixon's this year, and then from Lyndon Johnson, whose racial policies seemed too liberal and whose war policies became hopelessly muddled and deceitful. Neither President became a repository of trust for the forgotten man.

Despite his failure to seduce the suburban white-collar swing voter, Nixon makes an enormous appeal to the forgotten man of the lower middle class. His life is something with which they can identify: born in humble circumstances, working his way up on his own, preaching the virtues of Americanism and standing foursquare against communism, losing two major political battles, and yet succeeding in the end. The Algeresque overtones may seem corny to much of the population, but they represent something very real to the millions whose world view features lazy welfare chiselers, honest workingmen, malodorous hippies and friendly cops.

And it is among this segment of Americans that Richard Nixon can exercise a high degree of statesmanship and even, quite possibly, make an outstanding contribution to the development of American democracy. Just as it took a Republican Chief Justice to preside over the end of legal segregation, a Republican President to call for the first massive federal aid to education, and a Republican administration to stop Joe McCarthy, so it will take a Republican to make the new relationships in this country seem legitimate to the forgotten man. This surely is not the result of the Republican Party's superior virtue or liberalism. It is, on the other hand, a function of its image of stolid orthodoxy, which enables it to do some things that nobody else could do without being labeled crank or subversive. When Northern Democrats call for integration, propose federal aid, or attack Joe McCarthy, they are merely acting "in character"; when Republicans do it, they appear to be acting sincerely in the national interest.

It is thus vital that Nixon retain much of the impetus of the Great Society; not only will it enable him to woo the decisive suburban vote but it will demonstrate to the loyal 43 per cent that there is some merit to social reform and racial equality that stands above parties and belongs in the American tradition. Hubert Humphrey could never persuade this group: Richard Nixon at this moment in history is the only man who can.

Is there room for optimism? Richard Nixon's career is like the Bible; you can read almost anything into it that you want. But its general tenor has been cautious and conservative. Now that he has attained the goal for which all the caution and conservatism were so skillfully employed, Nixon must break out of the strait jacket of the 43 per cent and commit himself to a broad program of positive accomplishment. For if the Republican Party is ever to be reborn, and if America is ever to be reunited, then the President must make credible some degree of common ground for the managers and professionals and the forgotten men. And for this task, if he possesses the vision, Richard Nixon has been chosen.

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LIBERAL COMMUNISM *The Basic Dogma, the Scope for Freedom, the Danger in Optimism*

C. P. SNOW

Lord Snow's The Sleep of Reason, *eleventh and next to last novel in the "Strangers and Brothers" series, will be published by Scribner's in January and is the January Book-of-the-Month Club selection. Lord Snow has been in this country recently to deliver the John Findley Green Lecture at Westminster College, Fulton, Mo. (delivering this lecture in 1946, Sir Winston Churchill proclaimed that an "iron curtain" had descended in Europe).*

The following text is the introduction to Georgi Dzhagarov's play, The Public Prosecutor, *as adapted from the Bulgarian by C. P. Snow and Pamela Hansford Johnson. It will be published in 1969 by Peter Owen (London).*

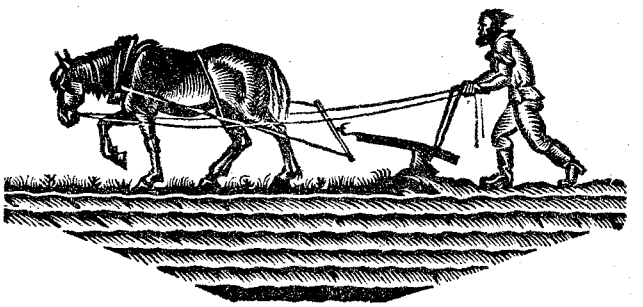
London

Georgi Dzhagarov is a Bulgarian. He is a Communist, and a member of the Communist Party. After making a reputation as a poet (he is now in his early 40s), he had a play produced on the Bulgarian stage. This was in 1964, and the play was *The Public Prosecutor*. It is the most direct attack on Stalinism yet made by a writer in Eastern Europe. The play is the biggest success his own country has seen for years. Not long after it was produced, he was appointed President of the Writers' Union; as in all Socialist countries, that is an official position, and one that he still holds. Dzhagarov had been sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment by the pre-Communist regime. He is now a member of the Bulgarian parliament.

To anyone who doesn't know Eastern Europe it is perhaps no more surprising that Dzhagarov and his play should come from Bulgaria than from anywhere else east of a line between, say, Hamburg and Trieste. Yet in fact it is in many ways very surprising. To begin with, Bulgaria is in sympathy by far the closest to Russia of all the Eastern countries. There are good reasons, historical, traditional, cultural, ethnic, even linguistic, for this. It was the Russian army which in the 1870s freed Bulgaria from very nearly 500 years of what is always called "the Turkish yoke." That was an occupation which seems to have kept the country as stagnant as is possible for a human society, and which did not bring, so far as anyone can trace, a scrap of art or a single idea; so that both culture and language could be kept alive by one agency only, the Bulgarian priests of the orthodox Church, whose predecessors had in earlier and more glorious days, before the Turks arrived, given the emerging Russians both the Cyrillic alphabet and a liturgical language (Church Slavonic, which takes the place of Latin in Russian orthodox services, is actually medieval Bulgarian).

The Russians put an end to Turkish rule: and the people, and nearly all the intellectuals—though not the ruling class, who with singular cunning got on the losing side in both World Wars—have been pro-Russian to this day. The great cathedral in Sofia, which is mentioned in Dzhagarov's play, is called the Alexander Nevsky, after the Russian hero and saint. A gigantic monument in Plovdiv is in the shape of a 19th-century Russian soldier. Bulgaria is the only country in Eastern Europe where one could hear someone say, with complete simplicity and openness, as I have heard myself, that here we regard the Russians as our big brothers. Not a trace of irony. It was said with the emotional candor which they share with the Russians, as well as the "broad nature," for which they have an equivalent phrase. For me personally, the fact that I am known to love Russians as Russians has been a help in Bulgaria, instead of the handicap it can be elsewhere in Eastern Europe (or rather the incomprehensible addiction of someone who appears otherwise to be a reputable writer and a fairly sensible man).

If one forgets the extreme variety and beauty of the



Bulgarian landscape, so much in contrast to the endless stretches of the steppes, one might imagine oneself in southern Russia. The faces in the street look very much the same. The language is much closer to Russian than is Polish or Czech, and Russian is a real second language in Bulgarian schools. Dzhagarov himself could pass for a Russian. Bulgarian scientists go to work in Moscow, and tend to stay there, rather as English scientists go to the United States. There is, and has been for a long time, a very easy flow of feeling between the two countries. You can see it in Turgenev's novels. When Turgenev wanted an active hero, higher spirited and less inhibited than his Russian men, he chose a Bulgarian. This is still the picture Russians have of these other Slavs—much like themselves, but several drinks above par. Incidentally, it is a picture which Bulgarians themselves accept with considerable enthusiasm.

All this sympathy and interplay made it fairly natural for Bulgarian political development, after the Hitler war, to follow the Soviet line. On September 9, 1944—the day referred to by Dzhagarov's characters as "the Ninth"—Soviet armies were in the Balkans and the Bulgarians joined their side. There were plenty of trained Bulgarian Communists available, such as Dimitrov, the hero of the Reichstag trial. Between the two wars, underground movements had been struggling against various reactionary regimes: old Voynov in *The Public Prosecutor* is both a

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reminder and a personification of those struggles, and the suffering and hopes that the Communist forefathers had been through. After the Ninth, it would have taken more than protests from Washington, which duly arrived, to prevent the country's becoming a Soviet-type state. It happened with less friction than anywhere else in Eastern Europe. Since the Soviet Union was in its most rigorous Stalinist phase, Bulgaria took on the same form, and between 1945 and 1956 became, at least on the surface, more Stalinist than the Stalinists. It is precisely this period which Dzhagarov is writing about in his play.

The Basic Creed

There are certain elements in a Socialist state which anyone who can really be called a Communist takes for granted. For example:

(a) Public ownership of the means of production.

(b) Central planning and control of all major activities, such as industry and education.

(c) The role of the Communist Party—itself a select minority—as the sole policy-making and decision-making body in the state.

One cannot be a Communist without taking these features for granted although, as these pages go to the printer, some Czech Communists are disputing the third point. More than that, Communists must believe that in the long run they will make for the good society, or at the very least for a better society than has yet existed. Men like Dzhagarov or the Russian liberal Communists certainly believe that. Some peripheral questions, to which I now come, have been raised by Communists in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland; but it is important to realize that they are peripheral. The fundamental axioms remain.

There follows an area of real doubt, which I will call (d): the necessity for the Communist Party, in order to build the new society and a new race of Communist men (what the Russians call Soviet Man), to guide and control all intellectual expression. This is an area which has aroused great passion in the West, and I shall return to it later. I will just say here that within it are contained some very difficult problems for the most liberal of Communists. All of them will, of course, want the control of expression to be much looser than it is in contemporary Russia. But none—certainly none that I have ever met—would consider that complete liberty, in the Western sense, is either possible in a Socialist society, or even desirable (I am speaking here of persons who are Communists, however liberal: there are, needless to say, others, non-Communists, some of them alienated, who would welcome Western liberty at any price).

All Stalinists, which is a bad expression and herds together people of many shades of opinion, would be in substantial agreement on the necessity for this control. In fact, it is one of the classical features of what we call Stalinism. There are two others.

(e) Extreme concentration of power. In the original theory of the early phases of the Socialist state, opinion was supposed to flow up from the party at the worker level, expressing the workers' desires and needs; and then decision would flow down from the higher echelons of the party. But it didn't work quite like that. The crisis of the October Revolution, the civil war, the tasks of surviving afterward, helped to concentrate power into fewer and fewer hands: and so did the nature of power structures themselves. There was nothing surprising in this. It could have been predicted, or feared—in fact, it had been both predicted and feared—by anyone who had thought seriously about the politics of power. In some aspects it had major advantages: when you are struggling to survive, you must avoid compromise decisions, and that is what power concentrations can do. But they can also produce all the evils of a society without checks and balances—arbitrary arrest, the existence of powers dominating or side-stepping the law—and this is what Stalinist phases have invariably done. There are various discreet or euphemistic names for those happenings, such as "violation of Socialist legality."

(f) The cult of personality. Now this really is surprising. As I have just mentioned, political thinkers for a long time past have been aware of the dangers of concentrated power: but no one that I have heard of ever thought that, in modern times, one of those dangers was deification. Yet that was what, in front of everyone's mystified eyes, happened to Stalin. No human being in his own lifetime, it seemed, had received such choruses from cherubim and seraphim since the time of Alexander the Great. It was astonishing to observe from the viewpoint of another country. It would have been equally astonishing to Marx and Lenin, who were after all rational 19th-century intellectuals.

Of course, the power structure encouraged the process. Stalin himself, it must be presumed, found it tactically helpful. And there is no reason to believe that he found it personally distasteful (anyone can stop being a god if he really wants). Yet the process, though astonishing, wasn't just an official device: that helped, but only a little, compared with the scale of a worship which spread not only through the Soviet Union but among Communists everywhere. And not only among simple people. Pasternak wrote poetry in praise of Stalin. Maybe Pasternak was trying to be diplomatic, though the words don't read like that. But Joliot-Curie, Bernal—two of the cleverest men in the world—I am quite certain they believed what they said. At the time, their hallelujahs ("Stalin is the greatest scientist in the world") made it more difficult to argue, as plenty of well-wishers wanted to, that this mass prostration was a purely Russian, as opposed to a Communist, phenomenon. The Russian had always needed a god figure, we heard. The Czar as Little Father. The Czar emerging through the iconostasis. The profound obeisances of the orthodox Church. Peter the Great. The Bronze Horseman. The Russian religious spirit. The Russian soul.

All that was argued. But it came to look singularly ridiculous when precisely the same phenomenon, multiplied by a factor of 100, happened in a society which culturally couldn't have been more different. For China, as compared with Russia, has always been sensible and secular: there aren't any Dostoevskys in Chinese literature; no culture had gone in less for gods, or even heroes. And yet—the deification of Mao soon reached a point where

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the tributes paid to Stalin in his heyday began to seem grudging. One can now say of Mao, with fair certainty, that no human being in the whole of history has ever heard with his own ears so much praise uttered by so many. So this "cult of personality" has happened twice, in the only two profound revolutions so far experienced. It begins to look as though it is part of the morphology of a revolution. It is the one part which contemporary Stalinists in Russia would not attempt to defend. Once more the "cult of personality" is a euphemistic phrase.

Motives of Stalinism

What about contemporary Stalinists? Yes, there are some. I am referring to the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries. (Obviously in China there are several hundred million, but China is going through a more primitive stage of the revolution, in some ways resembling Russia in the late twenties and early thirties, but with extreme idiosyncrasies of its own: it is possible that its social development may be wildly different. I don't really believe that it will, in the long run, because technology imposes a good many of its own forms. But that battle of technology versus political abstraction is what the Cultural Revolution is all about.) Even after the Twentieth Party Congress, when Stalinism was officially denounced in Russia, there have been Stalinists left in all Eastern European countries, often in high places. This fact is noticed, with a good deal of unfriendly pleasure, in the West; and it is assumed that all these people (the Stalin's Heirs of Yevtushenko's well-known poem) must be very wicked men. The truth, however, is more complicated.

The people who administered the Soviet Stalinist state between, say, 1934 and the death of Stalin, did so from a variety of motives: conviction, opportunism and self-interest (any state apparatus multiplies jobs, not so much with material advantages though they sometimes exist but much more with status and power), and fear. Some people, since Russians are very much like the rest of us, acted out of a mixture of these motives, and some out of just one of them. Fear has been a reality in any Stalinist state. Self-interest operates as in all societies, and is no more interesting in Eastern Europe than it is in Los Angeles or Manchester. It ought to be noticed that, in Dzhagarov's play, the one character for whom he has no charity at all is the smooth operator, Boyan, who is, as a matter of calculation, prepared to accept the Stalinist regime when it is in full vigor, has a shrewd nose for when it is breaking down, and is cheerfully prepared to get on well in the reformed state. But then Dzhagarov is a brave and pure soul; there are plenty of Boyans. If this country had known an extreme situation—such as Nazi occupation—there would have been a surprising number of Boyans. It is not for us to condemn them to the limit, unless we were to know how we ourselves would have behaved.

Still, those who were and are Stalinists out of conviction are not so commonplace. And here, with his police officer Nikolov (who in Bulgarian or other Continental legal procedures is called an investigating magistrate), Dzhagarov shows great sympathy and understanding. What is such a man convinced of? I have met similar people in Russia, often much more intellectual, often of complete integrity. If the year of my birth (1905) had remained unchanged, but I had been born a Russian, I suppose I should be a liberal Communist, and should have aligned myself with Tvardovsky. It probably wouldn't be easy to remember today that some of my opponents, holding views which I believed to be destructive, were in character better than I. Yet that would be the case.

What are these convictions that such opponents would hold? I am going to be a little more articulate than Nikolov —who is a fairly humble officer of a Stalinist regime— and try to find words for him. First of all, it goes without saying, he accepts, not passively but actively, with absolute certainty, the three major doctrines which I listed earlier as (a), (b) and(c). He would not admit the slightest qualification even at the edges, e.g., the minor amount of private ownership that is permitted in Poland. Even if it makes material life slightly more comfortable, which it does, that isn't good enough. You've got to be inflexible and not worry about short-run amenities if you're going to create Soviet Man.

On the other hand, our super-Nikolov—I am really thinking of one or two pillars of society whom I have known in Russia—would admit that the "cult of personality" had been a mistake. He would admit it without much emotion or regret. If you are performing great historical tasks, great mistakes are likely to occur. It won't happen again (in fact in the Soviet Union there seems to be a real collective will in favor of keeping the leaders about as free from charisma as the President of Switzerland).

History and Necessity

The same would apply to "abuses of Socialist legality." But here the contemporary Stalinist might become quite rough. Yes, bad things took place. But in the sight of history they will be small compared with the great things. We have transformed a society in fifty years. It is now a good society, compared with others. It hasn't fulfilled all our hopes: there is still crime, incompetence, backwardness. But there is less backwardness than anyone would have believed who knew the deep Russia of 1917. There is far less crime than in the United States. By and large, this is a healthier society than that of the West. Millions of lives have been lost in making it; some of them innocent lives, because of the abuses of legality. But they have been lost in a gigantic historic task, like the innocent victims of the English Industrial Revolution. Now that task is effectively complete, and there won't be any more such victims. We have attended to the matter of legality. Abuses have been stopped and won't recur. Nevertheless, that does not mean that we shan't need vigilance and discipline. We have enemies outside, even now that we are successful: they are still capable of doing harm inside. After all, we know about the techniques of revolution. Remember, the more senior of us have been revolutionaries ourselves. We shall need a security service, KGB or whatever new name we give it, for at least another generation. We are becoming a successful society, and we're not taking any risks: if we're going to make an error, it will be an error on the safe side.

I have heard something like that a good many times. I

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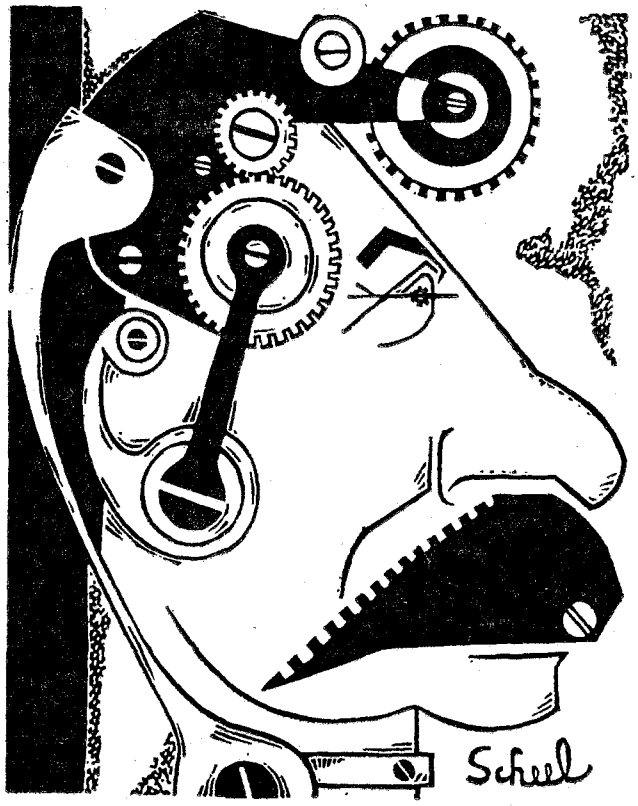

have also heard, a good deal more strongly, the attitude about intellectual expression. *Of course* the party must control it. We believe that people are capable of being improved: we also believe that they are capable of being degraded. You (addressing me) have seen our television. We know it is dull, but it cannot do a single person harm. Can you say as much of your own?

A very sophisticated neo-Stalinist once told me that no society with a purpose could possibly believe in freedom of expression as an absolute value. In fact, the more this was taken as an absolute value, the more purposeless we could assume the society was.

This divide about the motive and function of art is very deep—much deeper, I fancy, than, say, Italian Communists, brought up in a Western tradition, realize. It is worth remembering that Tolstoy and Dostoevsky would have agreed with my neo-Stalinist acquaintances without considering that the matter deserved a second thought. Naturally, there are Western-oriented Communists in Russia, and even more non-Communists, who take to Western art very easily: *a fortiori*, that is more common in Western-looking countries, such as Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania. But I think it is quite rare for a gremial Russian, or a gremial Bulgarian, to read our books or look at our pictures as we do ourselves: they may even like them, but the divide is greater than we think. Obviously, exactly the same is true the other way round.

The position is complicated by what may be an accident. Or I may be imagining it. But it does seem to a foreigner that Russians, though highly literary and musical, are a notably nonvisual people, so far as these generalizations mean anything at all. It is true that Kandinsky, Malevich, Lessitsky were pioneers of abstraction, but otherwise we have to go back to Rublev and the other icon painters to find anything approaching the world class. One certainly gets the impression in Russia—Russian Russia—that there is a level of visual uninterest: it is possible that a visitor to 19th-century England might have got a similar impression. The contrast is very sharp when one moves into Latvia or Poland or Bulgaria—and most of all into Georgia, a country of painters and visual brilliance.

So that even with the most cultivated orthodox Communist or neo-Stalinist, it is next door to impossible to have a serious discussion about abstract art. But it is quite easy to have such a discussion about free expression in literature, "modernism," and so on. I have had many of them myself, with people eminent in Soviet intellectual life. Don't think they feel on the defensive. They think that they are broadly right, and that the West is wrong. They will admit that the West has gained something technically in literature through its total freedom, but that it has lost much more. They just despise "modernist" (that is the word they use, meaning historically what we do, though it has with them a pejorative edge) literature. It seems to them decadent both in form and content; and they are perfectly prepared to put their own up against it. Restrictions? No great literature, they say, has ever thrived without them: otherwise it is not engaged with society. They are a little uneasy that the greatest prose work of the Soviet period, Sholokhov's *And Quiet Flows the Don,* was first published nearly forty years ago. But they claim that their poetry is now the best in the world. Since the idiom is so different from ours, and even the purpose (except with the "private" poets, e.g., Akhmatova, Akhmadulina, Voznesensky), that is a proposition which one can't test. One can test their new prose writing, and there is no doubt that in short stories and novellas a couple of dozen people are writing with an ease and naturalness that flows out of the great Russian tradition. The official climate in 1968 is bleaker than it was six or seven years ago: a lot of this fine work has come out in this same year, and there is nothing quite like it in the West.

Limits of Freedom

What does a liberal Communist want? Let me repeat, I am talking about liberal or reforming *Communists,* such as Tvardovsky and Dzhagarov, and not about Soviet or Bulgarian citizens who are not Communists at all. There are a number in this latter category, including some first-class writers. As I have said before, these are crying out for all the literary liberties of the West, *Ulysses* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover,* even if that means *The Night Clerk* and *Candy,* the latest work of Gore Vidal and all. Now I come to think of it, I have never pressed them, or any root-and-branch libertarian anywhere, about what happens if some enterprising publisher produces selected excerpts from *Der Stürmer.* Freedom is an odd word.

That is, however, beside the point. Take a liberal Communist round a bookstore in London or New York: he may be as uninhibited as a man can reasonably be, he may be a pin-up idol in his own country (that is, incidentally, as true of Dzhagarov as it is of Yevtushenko), but he will say that a good many of these exhibits are unthinkable in

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his society. And, like the rest of us, he will be concerned with one of the most intractable of problems, which is where the limits of freedom can be drawn.

On the other hand, he won't be anything like so acceptant as his orthodox compatriots whom I have just been discussing. He will feel that the restrictions have done both artistic and political harm. He will be more passionate about the political restrictions than the sexual ones. Russians and Bulgarians are hearty people, near enough to their peasant stock not to make much fuss about sex. There is, as it happens, very little tradition of pornography or aestheticized sex in their literature. But political restrictions cut nearer to the bone. Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* affected intellectual Moscow last year like half a dozen shots of vodka per head. No novel for years had had such a success. But Bulgakov has been dead for nearly thirty years, and the novel—which is a bizarre satire on Soviet society, with a touch of something like eccentric genius—has been held up for longer than that. Many members in the Union of Soviet Writers wanted *Novy Mir* to be allowed to publish *The Cancer Ward* by Solzhenitsyn. They were overruled at a high party level. That was three steps back for the liberals.

Perhaps the simplest example is the best, and it brings us to the present play. Although it is known in various countries of Eastern Europe in different forms (radio, publication of the script) it has not yet, so far as I know, been produced on the stage outside Bulgaria. Many theatres would like to do it: but, to the best of my belief, the 1967 production at the Hampstead Theatre Club in London was the first outside its author's native country.

The liberal writers soldier on, confident that, despite reverses, things are going, and must ultimately go, their way. Bulgaria is lucky in having several party leaders who are unusually benevolent—and well informed—about the arts. But one must remember that in all Socialist countries this is an occupational problem which doesn't seem real, or probably doesn't even touch the general public. The public may vote with their feet, so to speak, and refuse to buy dull literary works. As soon as Soviet magazines had to earn their circulations, editors found the public wanted to read Agatha Christie and Simenon. In the political struggle, though, the liberal writers are on their own. There will be a good many compromises. No foreign intervention is any good: in fact, any foreign intervention, from any source whatever, can only do harm. Meanwhile, the writers will go on trying to find their own solutions. Financially, they are by and large much better off than Western writers. Perhaps as a result of this, or perhaps because of other conditions, they produce very much less.

It is important to get the priorities straight. The problem of the limits of artistic freedom, though it is a genuine one, isn't a first consideration for serious anti-Stalinists. They have been through too many extreme situations for that. Dzhagarov's play deals with something both simpler and graver. Get *that* right, he is saying; then we can move on to other things.

The same applies to the economic reforms which occupy a certain amount of liberal Communist discussion. In overall strategy, the Socialist economy has been a major success. That is, it has produced national wealth, not only in the Soviet Union but in other Socialist countries, very fast; almost certainly, much faster than could have been done under capitalism. Still, too little of this wealth filters down to the individual citizen. And further, an economy nationalized down to the last tearoom seems singularly inept at providing the minor social comforts. Food inside Russian homes, for instance, is among the best in the world. In hotels, when you have waited long enough, you don't notice what the food is like.

In some of the Socialist countries, particularly those that have links with the West and know the things at which we are proficient—that is true of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland—those questions are being raised. They are not trivial questions. To some of them, answers may be found quite soon. But they are peripheral. At the core of real anti-Stalinism, of committed liberal Communist thinking, there is something much more fundamental. It is that to which Dzhagarov addressed himself, and it is time we got there.

The Tap at Midnight

The most essential of human freedoms is simply to live. The next most essential is a negative one. It is freedom from illegality. You can't breathe easily if you don't know what the law will do, when the police will pick you up, when you may suddenly find yourself under arbitrary arrest. The tap on the door at midnight. *Nacht und Nebel.* In this violent century, that has been a horror to many: and the fear of it has been a horror to very many more.

It is intolerable. It is not to be borne. But many people have had to bear it, all over the world. In Eastern Europe, hundreds of thousands, or millions, of Russians, most of them in the period between the purges of the thirties and the death of Stalin: in the other Socialist countries, tens of thousands more, most of them between 1945 and the de-Stalinization (in Bulgaria, following Moscow, this meant 1956). No one knows the number of lives that were lost. Why did it happen? How did it happen? How can it be prevented from happening again? To a man like Dzhagarov, these are the cardinal questions. Anything else can be laughed off and endured, but not *this*. In his play, he tries to give the answers, symbolized in the fate of one Bulgarian. And in the connected fates of two decent men, a police officer who believes devoutly in the Stalinist necessities, and the hero of the play, the Public Prosecutor, who has come to doubt them. The time is carefully chosen: it is not stated explicitly, but from internal references it must fall between 1953 and 1956, which in Bulgaria was just before the beginning of the thaw.

Why is the victim Pavel in trouble? To understand Dzhagarov's play, one must grasp the social ambience. With the exception of the Public Prosecutor, all his characters are simple but not stupid people. They are living in a small Bulgarian town with its own party headquarters and apparatus. The relatives of all of them would still be peasants, as Pavel's mother is. Often, though not in the official dialogues, they talk like peasants, with the timeworn comfortable phrases, proverbs and clichés. (Some English drama critics, with their incorrigible provincialism, blamed either Dzhagarov or the adaptation for this,

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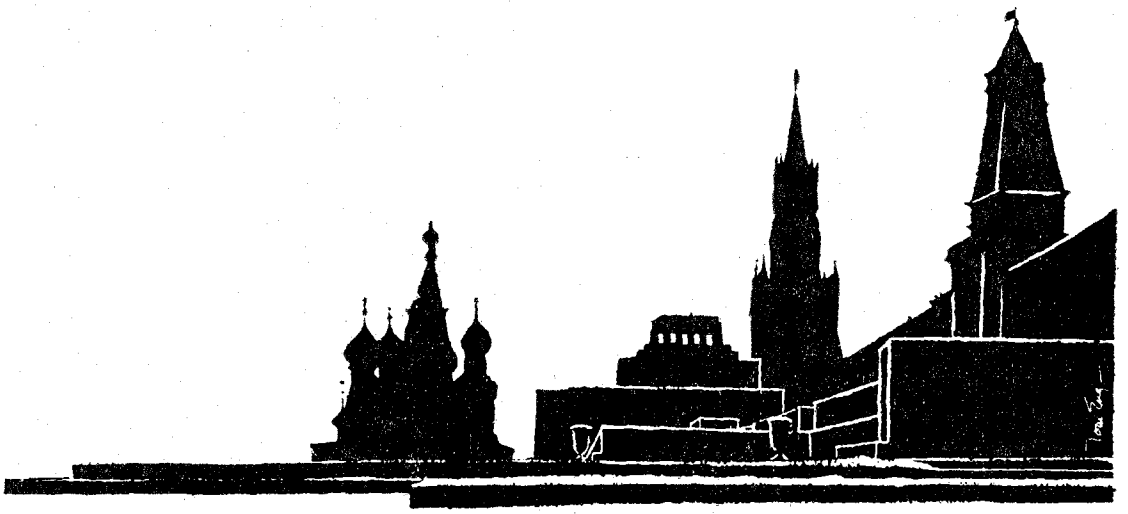

as though the characters ought to speak like an English intellectual's concept of the *Lumpenproletariat*. It should have been apparent that Dzhagarov, who is a highly sophisticated man, wrote it in that idiom deliberately; and in English the idiom was deliberately imitated.)

Pavel has been denounced. He never appears on stage, but his personality emerges. He is a party member; something of a local hero: brave, imprudent, unable to keep his mouth shut, ready to criticize. He has made a speech at a party plenary session. He has run foul of a cooperative chairman. He is clearly a bit of a busybody. In English terms, he might be a very active member of a local Labour Party, drafting resolutions criticizing the government at the annual conference.

In the paranoia of a Stalinist atmosphere, that is enough to convince the security police that he is an enemy of the state. Nikolov, who is an entirely honest man, believes this without a tremor of doubt. And having come to believe, he doesn't care where the evidence comes from. The iron necessity is to get rid of Pavel. Since he is an enemy, all that matters is to see him put away.

Duty and Conscience

The Public Prosecutor has known many such cases. He is himself a dedicated Communist: he too has accepted the necessity of detecting enemies of the state. There have, of course, been many genuine ones (for us, who live in a very old and stable society it is difficult to remember that—but cast your mind back to Elizabethan England). But more than once, doing his official duty, the Public Prosecutor has had to smother his doubts. He has acted like a lawyer with a brief, not knowing the prisoners (any more than an English prosecuting counsel would know the prisoners), following his official instructions. But sometimes he has not liked the look of the brief. We are not told how acute his doubts had become before the Pavel case, but it is a fair inference that very soon, Pavel or no Pavel, he would have made his stand. But he happens to know Pavel intimately, and of this the security police are entirely aware. That is one reason why they are insisting that he should do his official duty. It is a test of his political reliability also. He has known Pavel from childhood; he knows that Pavel, though wild, is a good Communist and a good man. In the long run, the Public Prosecutor has no choice. It won't help Pavel, but he sacrifices himself.

How do such things happen? Dzhagarov underlines two reasons, and hints at more. The two reasons he stresses are not novel, and are interlinked. One is that a society in its Socialist phase puts a premium on blind faith: that is, there will be plenty of Nikolovs, who will justify any action, so long as it is proclaimed a necessity. And the necessity is proclaimed from above, so that blind faith gets blended with a lack of individual responsibility. The whole play is, in fact, a passionate cry for individual responsibility. Unless, in the old protestant sense, a man stands by himself, there is no health in us. It was that cry which brought storms of agreement when it was uttered from the Sofia stage.

But what about the party in all this? The power comes from above, the necessities are proclaimed from above. Yet at least in theory, the power is held by consent of the party, coming right up from below. And old Voynov, that pure soul, who has devoted his life to the party, at one stage expresses his faith in this process: "It [the party] will speak when the time comes. . . . Sometimes it speaks in such a way that you have to listen with your mind and your heart. Sometimes it is silent, because it believes that we should manage on our own."

But the retired schoolteacher broods to himself, after making inquiries about Pavel: "I saw my old pupils, men in responsible positions who once fought on our side. One after another, they carefully elbowed me away. . . . Just look a bit deeper into them, and all you'll see is fear." That is the final horror to old Voynov. To reforming Communists like Dzhagarov, who might be his son, it presents the final problem. How can we prevent these things happening again?

Dangers of Optimism

Dzhagarov says it can be done only by the individual taking his responsibility. That is a moral injunction. But, of course, he is writing a play, not a worked-out plan for a new structure of society or the reform of Socialist jurisprudence. The problem remains. It has occupied, and is still occupying, some of the best minds in Eastern Europe —jurists, political thinkers, scientists. How do you make

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Socialist legality powerproof? Optimists claim that now the violations have been exposed to the world, legality is safe. That is too facile.

Optimism has always been more than half the trouble. Communism, like Christianity, is an optimistic creed. That is one of its sources of strength, and also of creeping danger. It was optimism that helped the Soviet Union win the greatest war in history; and that has helped it make a major material advance all over Eastern Europe. Men are right to be hopeful about what can be done with the social condition: with courage and intelligence there is no reason for most of the human race to live in hunger or to die before their time. That is one of the messages of communism: if the rest of us don't listen to it, then we're no good. But there are other messages; all are hopeful: one of them has done a lot of harm. It is that, once you transform society (i.e., take production out of private hands, and so abolish classes except for the formal distinctions between workers, peasants, intellectuals), then you eliminate—apart from survivals—the conflicts of the bourgeois world. Since by definition the conflicts don't exist, you don't need the controls, the checks and balances, of bourgeois justice.

That optimistic assumption sprang right out of the 19th century's hopeful and innocent air. It is, unfortunately, quite wrong. No one is going to be romantic about bourgeois justice. We all know how it has developed and for what reasons. We all know that its safeguards have been built in through clashes of interest, suspiciousness and distrust. But that doesn't matter objectively, to use the Marxist word. The point is, the safeguards are there. Clashes of interest, suspiciousness and distrust have their uses. It is genuinely difficult to arrest anyone in a bourgeois society. In England in particular the scales are loaded pretty heavily against the police. There are hundreds of persons walking around London today whom the police *know* to be guilty, many of them of serious crimes. Because of our laws of evidence, the police can't prove their case in court. Pavel in London might have been involved in gang murder: the police through their informers would know precisely what he had done: and, quite as likely as not, they couldn't pick him up.

Now that is clearly wrong. But it is better to be wrong that way than the other. In particular it is better to be wrong that way—in favor of the suspect—when it comes to political offenses, if a state is worried about political offenses. Somehow, the safeguards have to be built into Socialist law. In bourgeois societies we have been lucky: they have accumulated through clashes of interest, suspiciousness and distrust. It is clear, though orthodox Communists and some hopeful liberal Communists would deny it, that too much power still, after twelve years, rests with the Nikolovs of Eastern Europe.

How does Socialist law become powerproof? No one of whom I know has a satisfactory answer to that question; certainly I haven't. We should many of us be happier if we could see the answer: because we need the spirit and the hope of Dzhagarov and all that he represents.

As I said, he gives us, not a code of law but a moral injunction. I am going to finish, not with a code of law but with a psychological reflection. It is right to be optimistic about the social condition: it is wrong, if you are going to put the proper safeguards into a legal system, to be optimistic about the individual condition. We know—if we don't know it now, then we must be crazed—how men behave when they are given power. This isn't an abnormality or a pure accident or a consequence of the class strength that will soon be washed away. It is part of the blood and bone of the species, as much so as our sexuality.

False hopes drive out good. There are times when it is necessary to be pessimistic: when in fact pessimism is the only base on which to build real hopes.

I don't know about Dzhagarov himself, but it seems to me possible that communism of his kind is feeling its way to such a base.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT POVERTY

ROBERT J. LAMPMAN

Mr. Lampman is a staff member of the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin. He is the author of Top Wealth-Holders' Share of National Wealth *(Princeton University Press), one of several books he has written on the subject of poverty and wealth.*

In 1964 President Johnson declared a war on poverty as one theme for his Administration. It was fated to be the "other war," and to receive less than an all-out fight. Though it is too early to evaluate the historic significance of this first national effort to abolish poverty, it is time to ask what we have learned about the effectiveness of different approaches to the problem.

One thing that we have learned again we knew before: the faster the economy grows, the faster drops the number of the poor. In 1959-63, when unemployment was high and economic growth slow, the ranks of poverty were reduced by about only a million persons per year. In 1963-67, when unemployment was cut and real family income rose by 3 per cent per year, poverty reduction stepped up to 2 million persons per year. In 1959, 22 per cent of the total American population was poor and in 1963 the number had fallen only to 19 per cent. But by 1967, the proportion of Americans who were poor had sunk to 13 per cent.

To measure the problem in terms of numbers of persons, I have used the official Social Security definition of "poverty income," which differs according to family size. For example, a family of four is considered poor if it has an income below $3,315 in 1967 prices. (It is worth noting in this connection that a man may be fully employed at the minimum wage all year round, and still not reach as high as the officially recognized poverty line un-

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less he has less than two children.) There is, however, another way of measuring America's poverty. We can also add up the amount by which the *total income* of all the poor together falls short of what it would be if the income of each of them was as high as the poverty line. This figure is called the poverty-income gap, and it also has been shrinking. It is now under $10 billion and falling each year.

But there is more to the problem of reducing poverty than simply keeping the rate of economic activity high, and other trends of the last four years are reflected in these figures. High economic activity leads to increases in earned income; a companion factor is increased unearned income.

There has been a considerable growth of income to the poor in the form of social insurance and public assistance payments. Between 1964 and 1967, payments from this source rose from $33 billion to $46 billion (though by no means all of this went to the poor). The other part of the improvement in unearned income has been the growth of educational, health and other services. I estimate that the total of cash payments to the poor plus the value of actual services flowing to them from federal, state and local governments rose from $34 billion in 1964 to $40 billion in 1967. The Office of Economic Opportunity budget of under $2 billion a year is obviously only a small part of this increase. Large parts come from Medicare and Medicaid funds, federal aid to low-income school districts, vocational education and job training. Increased voluntary efforts have also been made by churches, associations of professionals, business leaders and the poor themselves. How well have such "service" programs worked?

One broad type of effort has been to equalize the access to community services. Police, courts, schools, welfare administrators, churches, libraries, hospitals and others have learned that they can do much to improve the quality of service to the poorest and least demanding of their clients. This instruction has been led by a new crop of specialists in the several professions dealing with the problem of the poor, who have learned to work *with* previously unidentified leaders of the poor. They have established new rights for the poor, new ways to enforce old rights, and have spread knowledge of such rights among the people. There can be no doubt that this campaign to equalize community services has improved the prospects that some poor persons will seize opportunities to escape from poverty.

It is also true, however, that some of the poor need not merely equal treatment but remedial or compensatory programs to overcome deficiencies of historic origin. If a child from a poor background is to be ready for school, he may need special Headstart training, special health care, even food. Some youngsters need a way to finance completion of high school or special training. The Neighborhood Youth Corps, Job Corps, and on-the-job training point the way. If we are to assure real equality of opportunity for higher education, those from poor families require the outreaching services of an Upward Bound Program.

We have found that such compensatory programs do assist many young people to get more out of school than they otherwise might. It is too early to know whether significant change in the rate of poverty reduction will result, but some early indications are that we must expect low benefits from such programs in relation to the amounts of money spent on them.

This push for equal and, more particularly, specialized services for the poor has produced a political backlash. The new alliance between experts and the poor themselves has rubbed hard against many in the lower middle class who customarily delivered such services. Many of the programs are short-lived and narrow of scope, and these limitations have created bitterness among those dropped from the programs, and those left out altogether. And the mere promise to spend more for the poorest than for those not quite so poor has aroused resentments of its own.

The most controversial of all the anti-poverty activities during the last four years has been the effort to achieve, according to the mandate of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, "maximum feasible participation of the poor" in "community action." It is charged that this rhetoric has encouraged militant protest; and many people have associated it with the riots of 1967 and 1968. But the character and timing of those civil disorders were such that they could not have been due solely, or even mainly, to this approach. Very little community action is actually involved in "organizing the poor."

One may agree to all that and yet subscribe to Daniel P. Moynihan's assertion in *Commentary* (August) that it is destructive to teach the poor that their salvation is assured if they will only organize to knock down the "walls"

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that bar them from "opportunity." One may also agree that organization of the poor has not always been directed to the attainment of the equal and special rights referred to above. In certain cases, such organization has drawn the poor into a general struggle against City Hall, or "the system," without any assurance that it will advance the cause of the poor. Some who advocate organization of the poor are, indeed, less concerned with poverty than with exploiting the energies of the poor in visionary efforts to transform the larger society and usher in a new social order. But for all that, community action has been responsible for numerous advances in many specific areas; and participation by an organized community of the poor may be a necessary condition to successful prosecution of the poverty war. It is not sufficient, however, for rapid progress. It can take the poor only so far.

Those involved in the scattered and diverse community action projects have made one great discovery; while poverty has many facets, it has a central core—lack of money. Perhaps it was not unpredictable that the specialists on the problems of the poor would become advocates of general as well as specific remedies—since the problems in one field (schools) often relate to problems in other fields (housing or health). These problems stem in turn from the basic matter of income, which can come only from jobs or income maintenance programs. Community actionists have gradually come to see that, as Michael Harrington put it in *Saturday Review* (July 27), "There is no simple, or even bloody, way to abolish poverty." He believes that the power to force the passage of sweeping federal legislation, which he thinks necessary, will come from a new political majority, or not at all.

So it is, then, that the war on poverty has raised up prophets who call for ultimate weapons. It is interesting that the 1964 declaration by President Johnson was silent on both the topics—jobs and income maintenance—singled out by the Poor People's March. These demands have been sloganeered as "government as employer of last resort" and "guaranteed minimum income." Even partial response to either demand would imply a significant escalation of the war on poverty; and President Johnson last January named a commission, headed by Ben W. Heineman, to study these and other radical proposals. Several other commissions, notably the Advisory Council on Public Assistance, the Commission on Automation and Technology, and the (Kerner) Commission on Civil Disorders, have called for action on the "jobs and income" fronts, but none of them has considered the options in detail.

Such demands for job and income guarantees have led many to observe that the country could abolish poverty with one blow at the cost of the $10 billion poverty income gap, and that we are not doing so because of a failure of national will. It is doubtful that it could be completely done at twice the price.

Consider the idea of job creation by government. Most of the poor, aside from the aged, disabled, and women with small children at home, are employed most of the time. And most of the people who are unemployed at any one time are not poor. This means that there is likely to be a serious discrepancy between the number of hard-core unemployed who are poor, and those who would like to have a government job with regularity of employment at minimum-wage rates.

If a limited number of such jobs were carefully rationed out to those with the poorest employment prospects, that would create a gross inequity between those who get such jobs and the 10 million who continue on their present jobs at less than the minimum wage. To avoid such inequities, and to strike a really major blow at poverty, the program would have to be on a scale of several million jobs. At $4,000 per job, even 2 million jobs would cost $8 billion. Moreover, what are the long-run prospects for maintaining high morale with such an operation? What would we do about the fact that a flat annual wage might exceed the poverty line for a small family, but fall short of it for a large family?

The latter consideration points toward an assured minimum income with a guarantee equal to the poverty line for each family size. But such a straightforward plan to fill each family's poverty-income gap would surely cost much more than the existing nation-wide gap of $10 billion. It is wide open to the abuse that many of those with earnings and property incomes of less than the poverty line, and some of those just above the line, would find it not worth their time to strive for earned income if it were *completely* offset by a reduction in their guaranteed income. This means that the plan would cost at least $20 billion—plus what we now spend on assistance.

It is worth repeating that most of the poor are now working most of the time. This strongly urges that any guaranteed income plan must build in some incentives to work and save. The person who adds to his earned income must be assured that he will not have that addition fully offset by a reduction in his benefit. But such a feature adds to the cost by making many more people eligible for benefits. A guarantee as high as the poverty line, together with a 50 per cent offset for earned income, would make almost 40 per cent of the population eligible for some benefits—and would cost about $25 billion.

The only way to avoid this huge cost is to cut the level of the guarantee. But to cut it very much will not only take it below the poverty line but also below assistance levels in many of the high-income states. Let us accept, for the moment, the idea that a moderate-cost guaranteed-income plan will not replace public assistance, which is now received by 9 million people. We are still left with the question: what will it do for the 17 million who are not on assistance—the working poor?

The answer is that it could do a great deal at relatively low cost, and without encouraging them to do less work. This can be accomplished by setting a low guarantee (say

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$750 for a family of four) and allow the family to keep it without any offset for the first $1,500 of earnings. The benefit would then be diminished by 50c for each dollar of additional earnings, until the benefit cancels out at $3,000. Such a plan would fill half the poverty income gap for most working poor families, and would do so for a total cost of about $4 billion.

Alternatives to government jobs and guaranteed income abound—government subsidy to private jobs, a children's allowance, increased benefits and easier eligibility under existing social insurance and public assistance programs. But concerning all these options there is no apparent consensus among the experts as to which should have priority, or how new money should be allocated.

We have had numerous studies but no consensus among experts, let alone political leaders, concerning new proposals for special jobs created for the poor, and variations of guaranteed incomes. It is not, then, a mere lack of will which prevents our eliminating poverty at one blow. There is a matter of substantial and uncertain cost, coupled with a lack of agreement concerning the most advantageous way to proceed.

We have, however, made some progress in at least getting these calculations and considerations on the national agenda. In the meantime, it is important to maintain the momentum of the last four years on the health, education, welfare, housing, labor and other fronts. They are all essential to victory.

EBB TIDE OF INTEGRATION

BARNEY SELLERS

Mr. Sellers, a director in Washington of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, was formerly special assistant to the director of the Office for Civil Rights in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

The passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were the high-water marks of a liberal effort to achieve social change through protective, remedial legislation. A notably unpopular war Administration has been responsible for seeing civil rights enforcement through its first years, but the era appears to be coming to an end. In a time when law and order is an increasingly loud cry from a white majority, law enforcement for minorities may go to the wall. The incoming Republicans seem of that opinion, and many liberals are abandoning the camp. Strangely enough, a last-minute about-face by the outgoing Administration may be contributing to the destruction.

The Presidential campaign gave clues of what we can expect. It inflamed racial sores and played upon popular misconceptions about federal interventions in school desegregation. Richard Nixon tried to appeal to segregationist voters in the South without sounding like a racist. In a panicky response to the late Humphrey upsurge, he made last-minute televised appeals for Wallace votes. During a discussion of desegregation enforcement under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, he announced his refusal "to use the withholding power to bring about enforced integration." In doing so, and by his promises to slow down federal school desegregation efforts, he won the White House with a Dixiecrat shadow.

The campaign will contribute to future troubles because it continued the distortion of major racial issues. For the most part, public misconceptions glaringly played upon by Wallace were quietly, though sometimes ignorantly, picked up by the Republicans. "Freedom of choice" school desegregation plans, in most cases subterfuges for the maintenance of segregation, were in the public eye. Nixon at first announced support of this student assignment procedure and objected to federal withholding of funds for plans which don't produce results. Afterward, outside the South, Nixon expressed his basic support of the 1954 *Brown* school desegregation decision, which "freedom of choice" is being used to evade, but insisted "the law does not require compulsory integration." But it does. In its May, 1968, *Green* case, the Supreme Court found that where free choice plans fail, school systems must "come forward with a plan that promises realistically to work, and promises realistically to work *now*."

The campaign touched on several other issues, one of them being the false, but emotional, issue of busing. Even though 90 per cent of all districts in the nation now deploy 230,000 buses to transport 17 million children, the procedure was declared irrelevant to desegregation, supposedly because it is rarely used. Withholding of federal aid was also questioned and its extent exaggerated. Contrary to campaign-made impressions, Washington has cut off money to only 120 school systems in the South, about 2 per cent of the total, and far fewer than are violating the law. Nixon echoed Wallace's colorful but wildly misleading picture of federal intervention in local school affairs. While Wallace unhesitatingly spoke of "throwing the brief-case totin' bureaucrats into the Potomac," Nixon theorized about returning educational functions to the states. These promises were made even though nine of every ten federal employees work outside Washington, and spend most of their time handing out federal benefits. Of 800 HEW employees in the South, for example, about fifty work on school desegregation. That's one bureaucrat for every 100 school districts.

While the campaign thus raised serious doubts about Republican intentions to enforce the law, other political considerations may push the new administration toward the same end. Although Nixon failed to capture the Deep South, he picked up most of the border states and is mindful of the key Southern committee chairmen who must support his programs, especially in military and financial affairs. An administration which has already

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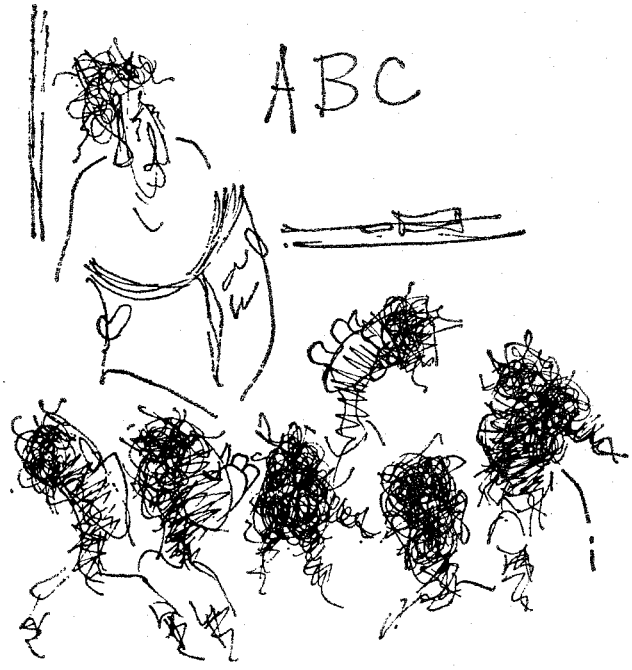
voiced its intention to increase military expenditures as a secure base for a foreign policy, and to attack urban problems by changing the tax laws for private capital, is unlikely to buck John Stennis, Richard Russell, Mendel Rivers (who campaigned for Wallace) and Wilbur Mills. Furthermore, Republican gains and near misses in the South promise an administration that must also grant favors to its Southern colleagues in Congress. Edward Gurney from Florida won a Republican seat in the Senate as a segregationist conservative. John Tower of Texas comes from a divided state which failed to go to Nixon by only 1 per cent of the vote, and where the Republican candidate for governor lost by less than 2 per cent. Strom Thurmond, hailed at the Miami convention as the voice of Dixie, came through by delivering South Carolina, the only Nixon victory in the Deep South. The new House will seat thirty-five Republican Congressmen from Southern and border states. Since the GOP is seeking desperately to be reborn in that region, it will be difficult for the administration to ignore the pleas of its legislative colleagues for a relaxation of federal desegregation pressure.

And the particular interests of the Republican Party may not be far from the temper of Congress at large. In the closing weeks of the 90th Congress, the House came within eight votes of accepting the distorted arguments of segregationist Jamie Whitten of Mississippi and supporting an amendment which would have legalized free-choice school desegregation plans, thus thwarting the Supreme Court's *Green* pronouncement and setting enforcement efforts back to the "separate but equal" days. The closeness of the vote on that significant civil rights issue indicates a possible falling away of liberal Northern support. This is likely to increase, and is partial proof of Southern predictions that Northern support for civil rights would die as the issue came closer to home. The Southern desegregation program is starting to hit larger cities, like Charleston and Greensboro, and is finally beginning to scout Northern districts that are appropriate for enforcement action. Northern Congressmen are therefore not as conspicuous as they once were when key enforcement votes come to the floor. Southerners, knowing this, are encouraged to keep up their steady attack on federal programs until they can win with quiet Northern defection.

These tendencies may be abetted by a move the present Administration made during the last days of the campaign. HEW recommended consideration of a shift of its compliance activities to the Department of Justice. Ordinarily, such an administrative change should pass unnoticed, but this action, if carried out, could prove fatal to civil rights enforcement. HEW has weathered one too many civil rights storms and is acting instinctively to safeguard the other social legislation it has long fought for. The recent Whitten battle placed the Department's $18 billion budget in danger and last year there were similar threats to the billion-dollar Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

A number of questions can be raised about the proposed move to Justice. First, it recalls painfully the demise of the President's Council on Equal Opportunity, a short-lived agency headed by the Vice President, which was suddenly killed after eight months as a dynamic leader of federal civil rights activity. Its broad functions were pared and the remainder—compliance under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964—was transferred to Justice, with a "coordination" mandate. The vigor of that past leadership has since dried up in the limitations of the amorphous coordination order issued to a conservative federal agency that is concerned entirely with litigation. With Nixon promising even greater conservatism through the naming of a new Attorney General, there is little likelihood of improvement.

If the transfer goes through, there is even some thought that the shift might be broadened to include the remaining twenty federal agencies with Title VI duties. To date, the leadership Justice has shown other agencies has been limited largely to situations that fit into its own interests. The shift of school desegregation powers would conflict with present Justice priorities, since fair employment is now the top Justice preoccupation. In addition, past Justice experience has been confined entirely to litigation. It has no practice with Title VI administrative hearings, the technique that HEW has used to obtain compliance. The court route would be impeded by the small staff available to Justice, its innate concern with the attitudes of Southern district judges who still can't accept desegregation and the delays inherent in judicial appeal, which could affect the government's ability to enforce change before the opening of each school year. The transfer of staff from HEW would raise the hackles of Congressmen who have fought to decentralize the program into regional offices—a setup which Justice does not have. In addition, federal enforcement of civil rights would become one fat target for Congressional attack instead of the diffuse picture it now is—a happy opportunity for Richard Russell, new chairman



Pat Fink

"In This Neighborhood We Ain't Got No White Knights Ridin' up on White Chargers—We Got Black Panthers Ridin' off in Black Marias."

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of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and James Eastland, chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

Most important, if the shift did mean return to the court route, it would yield less desegregation. The latest figures available from HEW show that school districts under court order have desegregated their Negro students only half as fast as the already slow-moving systems under administrative plans.

In the end, however, the coffin of enforcement may be nailed down by those who up to now have supported its life. First, liberals and Black Power advocates are ignoring the issue. In part, this indifference arises from a growing eagerness to disparage enforcement as a means of social change. "It isn't the answer any more," several have told me with reference to the growing complexities of urban issues. To a degree, they are right—because it never was the answer but only one tool. What they are complaining about is the failure of legislation they helped pass four years ago to solve all the nation's ills, as was then promised.

Second, enforcement is to liberal intellectuals an old, unsophisticated, and therefore distasteful approach to the solution of social problems. They can mentally enjoy the complexities of the urban crisis, and continually seek, support, and join the *avant garde* of liberal social debate. Enforcement doesn't fit their mood.

Third, there is a Northern blind spot in most discussions of national urban issues which ignores Southern problems. While attention is often paid to the effects of black Southern migration, little is done to counteract it. Finally, Southern liberals, most recently the Southern Regional Council, are properly concerned that enforcement simply hasn't achieved its goal—85 per cent of all black children in the South still attend segregated schools (we don't know the Northern figure). True, there is no answer to this. But true or not, it's more progress than we've had elsewhere.

White liberal feelings about enforcement also merge with new black feelings about separatism. The black militant refusal to support integration is being picked up by those whites who have lost the will to fight for it where it is still possible. In many Southern cities, for example, growing segregation can still be fought through legal means because the original forced separation provides a path for constitutional attack. While there is no certainty to this approach, there is hope. But if white officials can use Northern separatist arguments to stifle it, Southern chances for change will die completely.

Enforcement is not *the* answer to our racial and urban ills, but it would be foolish to ignore its use as a tool in a sophisticated strategy for change which considers, among other things, differences in region and community size. About 95 per cent of the black children in the Gary, Ind., elementary schools are in predominantly black schools: the same is true of Little Rock, Ark. In both cities the schools are substantially unequal. If enforcement can do *anything* to help any child in either of these cities, without impairing the effectiveness of other efforts at change, it should not be abandoned—by Republicans or anyone else. We owe it to the children. And that's where it all began.

LETTERS *(Continued from page 610)*

change. In reply to his argument I will take a few liberties with history and unfold a parable. The quotes are from Mr. Mishan.

"This new and wiser society will be wealthy enough, I assume, to finance their [the scientists'] activity for some time. . . ."

Once upon a time there was a wealthy, leisured society, in which kings and princes kept astronomers as pets. The only task these astronomers had to perform was to cast an occasional horoscope, advising as to the general favor of the stars, or about the moment most propitious to conceive an heir, etc. In return for this service astronomers had much free time and money. One such astronomer, B, spent his time and money in his observatory, improving his instruments and collecting very accurate data. Nobody at court paid attention to this data. . . .

". . . and to allay their craving for recognition by the provision of prizes and titles."

B's first patron gave him plenty of subsidy to publish his books, which he printed himself (vanity of vanities). They were nothing but tables of data and descriptions of instruments, of no immediate use to society. Still, when B's patron died, these books did help him to find another sponsor. So B moved to another court in another country, where for a little while life went on as before. . . .

"All their contributions to knowledge would be faithfully recorded for the admiration of their colleagues and for the wonder of future generations."

In his second place of employment B had met and worked with another astronomer, young K, who wasn't so much interested in data as in lofty speculation and mystical rhapsodizing about the nature of the universe. He also was said to cast very good horoscopes, and probably helped B in his tasks at court. After B died, K inherited all his data. In his spare time, over a period of about ten years, K fiddled with this data just to satisfy his mystical cravings for order in the universe. But when he announced his results in a letter to another of these pet scientists, one G, G did not admire but rather laughed at his mystical ravings and never read K's book.

"Applications of any of their discoveries would, however, be strictly forbidden."

Later, in 1616, the authorities made their first move. They finally realized that scientific speculations about the nature of the universe were subversive of the *status quo.* They suppressed Johannes Kepler's works—and Kepler had used Tycho Brahe's data as the indispensable basis for his calculations—as well as those of Galileo. They might have justified their action somewhat as follows:

"History will not stop. The human drama will continue to unfold. Music, art, literature, politics—and theology—will, we hope, flourish. Only ideological change as a consequence of scientific innovation will be a thing of the past."

But the most efficient "thought police" of the 17th century could not stop scientific theory from having a revolutionary effect upon human life. I suggest that the solutions to social problems raised today by the advance of science and technology will not be found that way either.

Theo J. Kalikow

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

The Great National Trial As History

THE MOONEY CASE. *By Richard H. Frost. Stanford University Press. 563 pp. $12.50.*

FRAME-UP: The Incredible Case of Tom Mooney and Warren Billings. *By Curt Gentry. W. W. Norton & Co. 496 pp. $7.50.*

CHRISTOPHER D. STONE
Mr. Stone is associate professor of law at the University of Southern California Law Center.

At six minutes after two o'clock on the afternoon of July 22, 1916, a bomb exploded along the route of a Preparedness Day Parade in San Francisco. Ten persons were killed and another forty injured. Within the next few days, the San Francisco police arrested a number of union agitators including, most memorably, Tom Mooney and Warren Billings. They were tried, convicted and ultimately sentenced to life imprisonment.

For more than two decades, Mooney and Billings remained in prison while friends and lawyers tested the capacities of America's institutions—from its public rallies to its courts, investigative commissions, governors and Presidents—to right what was possibly a grievous wrong. The trials had been conducted in, and were themselves to contribute to, a period of tumultuous national disorders. Charges that Mooney and Billings were pawns in a Bolshevik plot were soon paired off against theories that the police and prosecutors had been intent on framing Mooney and Billings, that Mexican patriots had planted the bomb, and that agents of the Kaiser had done it to foster disunity. Newspapers and pamphleteers set up a trade in fresh evidence, most significantly suggestions (buttressed in some instances by confessions) that crucial witnesses against the defendants had perjured themselves, quite possibly with the encouragement—at least—of District Attorney Fickert's office. In this atmosphere the proceedings assumed national and then even international significance.

Governor Olson freed Mooney and Billings in 1939, but the literature of the Mooney affair rolls on, still showing unflagging preoccupation with a seemingly fixed constellation of questions. The prosecution had stated, for example, that Mooney and Billings had planted the bomb at Market and Steuart Streets at about 1:50 P.M. The defense was able to obtain photographs of the parade made by an amateur from a rooftop some thirteen blocks from the explosion scene. Was it not Mooney and his wife who appeared in the foreground of the pictures? And did an enlargement of a clock face in the background of the photographs not show the hands of the clock at 1:58? How could Mooney have set the bomb at Market and Steuart Streets no earlier than 1:40, and by 1:58 have made his way through heavy parade traffic back to his rooftop reviewing stand thirteen blocks away? And what about the witnesses at the scene of the explosion who claimed to have seen a cylindrical object fall from the roof of a building only an instant before the flash? And how explain that one prosecution witness described Billings (who was 5 ft. 4 in.) as 5 ft. 10 in., wearing a dark gray suit, and another as being 5 ft. 7 in. or 5 ft. 8 in. in a light brown suit?

And so on and so forth. We went through all that in the first years after Dallas. What do these authors expect to achieve by stirring over these questions yet twice more, a half-century after the "facts" are in, when the scattering of memoranda and the deaths of men and memories have so hobbled judgment? Surely not to finally settle "what happened." What justifies our tilting so persistently at some questions of history long after we have judiciously surrendered up the hope of conquering others?

Unless an author answers these questions, he will not succeed in making *history* of the Mooney affair precisely because the *story*—like that of Sacco and Vanzetti, the Rosenbergs, Dreyfus and Hiss—can be exploited so fascinatingly without his turning out a really intellectually aspiring job. Two reasons for this fascination ought to be confronted.

For one, somewhere deep in our mental lives we are all living out the ordeal of a Vanzetti innocent, or a Dreyfus innocent, each of us held, like a loathsome insect over the fire of a wrathful prosecutor-state. There is an appetite for books that can succeed in confirming our fantasies because they feed and justify that part of ourselves which we are continuously constrained to keep hidden.

For another thing, such books readily (though, again, perhaps unintentionally) find themselves exploiting a sheerly aesthetic dimension. We study the characters and other bits of evidence that are strewn about the picture. We work the fragments into a whole, a unity in which dynamic tensions have been eliminated and, hence, everything is *explained*; then, someone draws our attention to an aspect of the picture we had not duly considered before—a shadow on a grassy knoll, the handwriting on a letter to the German Military Attaché, the hands on a fortuitously photographed clock—and then the picture loses its wholeness, falls away into parts once more incongruous, dissonant, unexplained. No matter; something deep in us wants to puzzle these things over anew, for in reorganizing the meaning of the pieces and energies we are creating something, reliving the act not as it *was* but as ourselves the artists make it, all the while discovering and testing our own senses of life.

By playing upon these tendencies, an author can make of a Mooney affair a work that grips our attention as does Kafka's *The Trial,* or Antonioni's *Blow-Up.* But from one who deals with "real" facts, we can demand something more (as well as something less) than we expect of literature. Not a search as narrow and unaspiring (and, for that matter, as naive and futile) as to establish whether Mooney was guilty or innocent, or even whether he was accorded a fair trial. A historian's task involves more mind, a looking *through* events to bring into focus the underlying rhythms of social and individual processes and perceptions.

At the least, what ought to be brought out of the Mooney affair is the interplay between great national trials and political action. We are told in Mr. Frost's painstaking book that the Chicago Federation of Labor rallied to support Mooney; a more seminal question is, how did Mooney (that is, the affair) bring support to the Chicago Federation of Labor? Do *causes célèbres* bring new members into activist causes? Or is there merely a shifting and spreading of affiliations so that, e.g., supporters of the Rosenbergs move over into support of a contemner of HUAC, with no net increase in radical activists? And one looks to a historian to discover not merely where the individual members of defense groups go but what happens to the power structure of the *ad hoc* defense groups as particular causes fade: do they disband—or are they such that new causes expand to fill them?

The effect of the great national trial

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in promoting social change may then turn out, on conscientious historical inspection, to be far less positive than hasty appearances might have it. For one thing, there is always a tendency for the various protests and rallies that build up around the trials to focus on imagined injustices of the judicial procedure rather than, as the Mooney activists would originally have preferred, on a broader spectrum of "class-warfare" grievances. The Spock trial may afford us a contemporary example of how the trial process can turn dissenters' energies aside if the rubric of the law—did Spock get a "fair trial"?—overwhelms the rubric of political action.

Not only may the great national trial make it difficult for social protests to maintain their original direction; there is also inherent in them a capacity for abating the tensions of the original confrontations, making the crisis appear less serious, and thus serving to suspend or impede meaningful social action.

This capacity stems from a fundamental ambivalence in popular reactions. The trials would seem, on the surface, to force individuals and groups to take serious stock of their positions. The society is afflicted with unrests, vaguely attributable. Then, suddenly, the law provides us with a suit. Now, there are symbolic champions and now we can see more clearly than before what it was: it was the Jews, or it was the anti-Semites, or it was the intellectuals, or it was the "pigs," those who loved children, or those who wanted to burn children, the railroad interests or the worker. The law, with its demands for a solution in either-or terms of guilt or innocence, lends itself to an art form that resembles, in many respects, the medieval passion play. The virtues and faults of the characters are writ so large and clear as would seem to force each man to make a moral choice that was avoidable so long as the issues had remained ill-defined, and therefore debatable.

But the consequences on the audience are not so simple. Dramatized through law, the original moral dilemma has been made too unreal, too caricatured, to serve as a drive to earnest and productive ethical inquiry and action. Indeed, that is probably a strong reason why the dramatization through law is so satisfying. Each individual is given an opportunity to cast his own conflicts of conscience out of himself, making of Spock or Dreyfus the one who will act out not only the physical hardships of confrontation but the moral hardships as well.

Then, too, just as the great national trial is drama, so also is it play. There are players and super-players, rules that we can learn; progress that we can follow; robes and roles and standard moves; and, of course we can—as with drama—both be involved and yet not really involved. Thus a substantial portion of the human endeavors that are built up, however serious they may be in form, are susceptible to be drawn into the service of the play element in man, Huizinga's *homo ludens*.

There is reason then to demand that these authors help us establish how much the great national trial spurs individuals and organizations to socially productive action, and to what extent the tumult is but a choosing up, a decision to be "on the side of" Mooney, or "on the side of" Fickert. This would not imply that great national trials are of no political consequence; on the contrary it may mean that the state, with the power to select the time and place of these events, has large political power, but not so much through the implied threats of the trials as through their capacity to absorb and divert energies, to turn issues, and to spread an illusion that "now we are having it out."

To study the Mooney affair is inevitably to study the rank the society accords to reason—that is, to the capacity of the society's institutions, primarily its courts, to confront urgently expressed demands for action with the claims of deeper principles. Both Mr. Gentry's book and Mr. Frost's book (the latter the less sensational and more scholarly of the two) keep this significance before the reader's mind.

Yet one may wonder whether the great national trial does not test something more about the judiciary than its capacity to maintain integrity in the face of high passions.

The nation, during the period of the Mooney affair, was as insane as a person who, in the face of a sudden onrush of terrifying new hopes and chaos, has simply lost the ability to tie together his identity, his purposes, and what it is that he is experiencing. Such a state signals a retreat inward that does not allow the exploring of new possibilities. Hence, protests that are constructive are perceived as threatening. Encroachments on freedom of thought and action are symbolized as liberating. Propositions that the society was once, in its abundance, willing to submit to testing, are now closeted beyond review.

This was the era of the Palmer raids, and the jailing of Debs, of dynamite packages shipped through the parcel post, of shattered windows in German-American shops. In Los Angeles, the producer of a film, *The Spirit of '76*, was sentenced to ten years in federal prison on the theory that he had cast an important ally in our war effort in an unfavorable light. In Montana, an organizer named Starr refused, in the face of an angry mob, to kiss an American flag. ("What is this thing anyway? Nothing but a piece of cotton with a little paint on it and some marks in the corner there.") When the mob had left him, beaten and bloody, he was given ten to twenty years for using language "calculated to bring the flag into contempt and disrepute."

While both books allude to contemporary derangements, their focus is primarily on the defendants. Their authors parade out evidence of the society's "bad nerves" only so far as is necessary to increase the credibility of their thesis that the judicial system failed Mooney and Billings. To evaluate how seriously the judicial system failed the nation calls for more digging and a broader focus.

It takes, first, an awareness that the task of securing national sanity—ordinarily thought to lie in the provinces of literature and art, and perhaps journalism—can draw significantly from the courts as well. They are in a unique capacity to contribute, partly because they are not in phase with the same rhythm of turmoil that activates the issues brought before them. They are in a position to set up a dialogue with the society not only through their dispositions of cases and through the reasoning of their opinions (as in *Brown v. Board*) but through their decisions as to what issues are to be called for review at all, e.g., to hear argument on the legality of a war or only on the legality of jury-selection procedures.

In the light of this potential, one has the feeling—which someone with the patience of a historian might substantiate or refute—that there was for perhaps two decades a critical failure of the nation's court systems; and that, further, the whole of this failure was a failure greater than the sum of all its parts, that is, the failure to free Mooney, plus the failure to free Debs, plus the failure to free the producer of *The Spirit of '76*. It was a failure to draw the country into a reconsideration of values that transcended the felt necessities of that terrible summer. It thus appears an abdication of whatever in-

DEATH

is patiently
making my mask as I sleep.
Each morning I awake
to discover in the corners of my eyes
the small tears of his wax.

PHILIP DOW

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fluence courts have to lead toward morality, and to lead toward sanity.

What are the boundaries of this influence? Why have the courts remained so reluctant to use it? How much should the judiciary look beyond the immediate parties before it? How much of the courts' function should be that of cultural psychoanalyst? All these are questions we should see weighed by the historian of the great national trial of Mooney's day and ours.

Repeat Performance

MIAMI AND THE SIEGE OF CHICAGO: An Informal History of the Republican and Democratic Conventions of 1968. *By Norman Mailer. World Publishing Co. 223 pp. $5.95. Signet Books. Paper 95c.*

ALAN TRACHTENBERG
Mr. Trachtenberg, author of Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol, *is currently a fellow of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University.*

> Politics did not, however, so much engage him as to withhold his thoughts from things of more importance.
>
> *Samuel Johnson on George Lyttleton*

Norman Mailer presents himself once more as a witness of our times, but the performance does not stand up to expectations. In his recent fiction and journalism Mailer has sharpened his language into an instrument impressively plastic and versatile; his powers of representation and emotional statement are formidable. Writing about the national conventions in the early 1960s, he emerged unexpectedly as a political journalist, and since then national politics, especially the "politics of confrontation," has absorbed much of his attention. In the essays on the Goldwater, Kennedy and Johnson nominations, and the Pentagon demonstration of October, 1967, Mailer combined the resources of fiction and reporting to create an authentic personal manner, with himself at the center of the account as the engaged, embattled witness, both participant and observer.

Miami and the Siege of Chicago employs many of the devices of the Pentagon work, *The Armies of the Night*, and has many passages of Mailer's indisputable genius. But the book does not measure up to its predecessor. Produced in haste immediately after the event—"only two weeks in which to do it, if his article were to appear before election"—the book is not the best Mailer can give us; it is the work of a tired and oppressed imagination. Part of the fault must lie in the nature of the assignment, which exploits Mailer's role as "hot" political observer. Mailer is called upon to repeat himself, to play for an anticipated mass audience, as if to complete the media event: first the assembling of the conventions, the congregation of delegates, faces scanned by close-up cameras, "types" depicting ideologies and interests, varieties of boredom; then the process of nomination, its air of intrigue, of pay-off and purchase, set against scenes of grotesque opulence and brawling violence; then Mailer on the scene. One detects a pattern, a formula devised somewhere else than the writer's own imagination.

The book, in short, seems to lack an inner necessity. Many of the descriptions and portraits are worth having, but very little is added by way of insight, let alone wisdom, regarding these two critical conventions and what they reveal about American political life. Virtually all the metaphors are familiar to Mailer's readers, the images of cancer, intestinal disorders, cannibalism, plastic architecture, technology land, and they fail to harvest any new meanings. The format or scenario continues with encounters with the famous and the notorious, fear and timidity washed away in drinking, rising combativeness, platforms, microphones, cheers, confrontations with police and military, fantasies of herohood together with twinges of remorse over private failures.

During much of the book Mailer, cast in the third person as "the reporter," is depressed, weary, frightened, avoiding action rather than searching it out. These feelings are understandable in the face of the sodden details of the conventions, the sense of crisis only tenuously held at bay by expensive Miami parties, or the new Nixon "sincerity" or the blind piggishness of the prevailing powers in Chicago. But oppression and fear are part of the book's atmosphere as well as explicit admissions; the joints and muscles of the words themselves, their attachment to one another and to the world they evoke, seem unaccountably stiff. The words betray a gnawing presence of feeling unformulated, a *something* nibbling at the far edge of consciousness; perhaps, as Mailer writes at one point, "the possibility of succumbing to fears larger than himself."

Does the problem lie, at least in part, in the fact that self-imitation was the fearful price Mailer had to pay for this book? The new book is an encore without the passion or fun, the controlled distance between player and role. By the sheer force of repetition, roles taken over by media culture become headlocks on the imagination. In *The American Dream* and *Why Are We in Vietnam?* Mailer showed he was able, brilliantly and persuasively, to mimic the voices and styles of mass culture, to separate the banal from the genuine, and to salvage from debasement a valuable core of dream and hope and energy. But in the current work, has he permitted himself to become a media extension?

Thanks to TV and mass-circulation magazines, politics is a major feature of popular culture. Nominating conventions have some of the characteristics of popular drama, accentuated by TV coverage which "stages" them in a format calculated to place the actors (including the commentators, the chorus) in a uniquely immediate relation with a live (if not living) audience. The value of engaging novelists as reporters lies in their expanded and enlightened treatment of politics as symptomatic of deeper human and cultural issues. But any marriage of serious art and popular or mass culture

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by George G. Kirstein

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runs certain risks, one of which is that the novelist will become just another feature of the scene, *of* it rather than apart from it, at best an ironic appurtenance allowing certain media to confirm their "sophistication" by transforming the popular event into a "Pop" happening. *Esquire*'s unleashing of such insightful political sachems as Terry Southern, William Burroughs and Genet on the Chicago scene is an example.

I hardly mean to say there is no place for serious writers in the mass media; to the contrary, the future of culture may very well depend on collaboration between the "serious" and the "popular." But some vigilance seems in order. Mailer's best audience is not the group which begs for a performance or a "Pop" hero, nor those (whoever they might be) who look to him as general of the troops. I'm not sure it is even the young people in Chicago who cheered him with cries, "Write! Write! . . . You're right, baby, do the writing!" If an old-timer like Samuel Johnson can still get a word in, his comment which heads this review might also be taken as pertinent.

A Plague and a Pleasure

THE SEANCE. *By Isaac Bashevis Singer. Translated by Alizah Shevrin and Elizabeth Shub. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 276 pp. $5.95.*

DANIEL STERN
Mr. Stern is a novelist and critic whose most recent book is The Suicide Academy (*McGraw-Hill*).

Isaac Bashevis Singer is a plague and a pleasure to most serious readers and critics of fiction. He is a pleasure because he writes with all the felicity of a 19th-century master—and a plague because no one knows where to place him. He is, on the one hand a Yiddish writer—an exponent of a dying language (though he recently said, in an interview: "Listen, young man, between dying and dead is a lot of difference"). On the other hand he is full of such modern nuances as irony, the macabre and symbolism. On the one hand he is a chronicler of a certain very special time and place: Polish Jewry and the *shtetl* life in the middle-to-late 19th century (with the exception of *The Slave* which takes place much earlier, during the scourge of Chmielnicki). And on the other hand he is a writer of universals: love, eroticism, passion, God. What to make of him?

Of late a certain querulousness has crept into the comments about Singer's work. At first I put it down to the fact that he was now no longer a minor classic, the property of a few hip *mavens*—but the property of the front page of *The New York Times Book Review*, the book clubs. And, starting with *The Slave*, he has made the bestseller lists. But the trouble lies deeper than such pettiness. Singer is easy to handle if you take his devils, his dybbuks, his saints, his elves as metaphors; mere material designed to illuminate larger symbolic matters. But, I maintain, no one will truly understand the special nature of Singer's genius until they realize that he is separated from us by more than the gulf of tradition dividing the old Polish Jew and the modern secular reader. The truth is Singer believes in God, in dybbuks, in magic, in a life after death.

"Let metaphor be God now Gods are metaphors," W. H. Gass has written. But what if God is *not* a metaphor? In one sense it is Singer's eroticism that has misled us. Only in this parochial age and this Protestant country could eroticism and religion appear to cancel each other out. In Singer—as in Judaism—God is as real as a woman's body. And if God and love-sex go hand in hand, cannot the devil and a wild, distorted eroticism also coexist?

In Singer's new book of stories, *The Seance*, all the elements of his previous work are present. And so is the very real presence of the supernatural. In "Two Corpses Go Dancing," one of the best of the stories, the narrator is the Devil. He tells us of his ability to raise the dead and send them back to roam among the living, not quite alive and not quite dead. Now, one can easily make metaphor out of this. Especially in light of the last lines: *"The world is full of dead ones in sable capes and fur coats who carouse among the living. Maybe your wife, maybe your neighbor, maybe you yourself. . . ."* Of course if Singer means that the spiritually empty are always with us, those who only partially live life, that is an authentic modern notion. But, going further, one finds in a story *narrated by the Devil* none of the usual distance between the author and his supernatural material. Thus one infers that the palpable presence of a theological evil on earth is what creates the living dead.

Or, take a story like "The Warehouse," which applies modern corporate conditions to a collection of souls waiting for bodies in the other world. The strength of the irony here comes precisely from the strength of the belief. The point being that Singer need not believe in a literal warehouse of souls—but, for his kind of stories to be as successful as they are, it is essential that he believe in the immortality of the soul. "The Dead Fiddler" is a completely convincing story of a dybbuk taking control of a lovely young girl. Again, Singer may not believe in actual dybbuks—though I rather suspect he does—but he does treat the spirit as substance and not poetic image.

Of course there are many stories in this book which also run in the vein of straight naturalism, rich with sharp social observation and humor. "The Needle" is the quintessential mother-in-law story, describing some very funny stratagems a rich woman employs to find the best wife for her son. (Incidentally, I heard Singer read it at the YMHA and he presented it as if he were telling a story he'd just heard about a local wily old woman. But he read his mad, impressionistic tales of the supernatural with the same easy familiarity.) "The Brooch" is a perhaps too facile story about a thief who is a good family man and is shattered when he discovers that his wife has learned his trade.

One of the longer stories in the book is called "The Letter Writer." It is also one of the more recent ones—and one of the few that deal with modern America. (Singer is apparently sensitive about this. In a prefatory note he writes: "I am glad that three of the stories. . . deal with events in the United States or Canada." Obviously he is tired of being tagged as the sage of 19th-century Poland.) "The Letter Writer" is a beautiful, atypical story about a refugee engulfed in loneliness and futility on the upper West Side of New York. It has a touch of Malamud and Bellow in it. It would seem on the surface to be a skeptical, sad study of the losses inflicted by age and tragedy. Yet the hero, Herman Gombiner, is prey to dreams that are more like visions, and when a strange woman comes to take care of him and perhaps end his loneliness, she does so because her dead grandmother spoke to her in a dream. "The Letter Writer" is one of Singer's most extraordinary achievements, as good as or better than "The Spinoza of Market Street" or "Gimpel the Fool." The interweaving of

THE DEAD SAILOR

As he drowned he saw
the ship following him like
the shark of the world.

LEWIS TURCO

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the daily urban life with that of the invisible worlds of heaven, the past, the imagination—all coalesce into the best work of a great writer.

The temper of our time is skeptical, ironic and unbelieving—in spite of a current tendency toward religious revival and mysticism. I think it is healthy for us to have Singer among us—with his real devils, his real God. William James wrote that it might be that what we call God may not be a finished process. "Something wild in the universe needs us and our works," he said. Among such needed works must be counted the tales of Isaac Bashevis Singer.

The Dangerous Scientific Life

LAWRENCE AND OPPENHEIMER. *By Nuel Pharr Davis. Simon & Schuster. 384 pp. $7.50.*

ALEXANDER ZUCKER
Mr. Zucker is a nuclear physicist at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Lawrence and Oppenheimer reads like a novel. In his effort to rivet the reader's interest and to maintain a fast pace, Davis frequently heightens the tone to make his story even more exciting. The two main characters appear, already formed, at the Berkeley campus of a university that is headed for greatness, where fate leads them, in Davis' account, to mortal conflict. This, then, is a story of their creative years—not biography, not history but more of a journalistic account of the major accomplishments of two famous scientists. Suspense is maintained by crosscutting the action abruptly from Lawrence's lab in Berkeley, to Oppenheimer's intellectual activities, to the scientific policy makers in Washington, and by the deft use of verbatim quotations, skillfully made to read like conversation. Hence the impression that one is reading fiction rather than history.

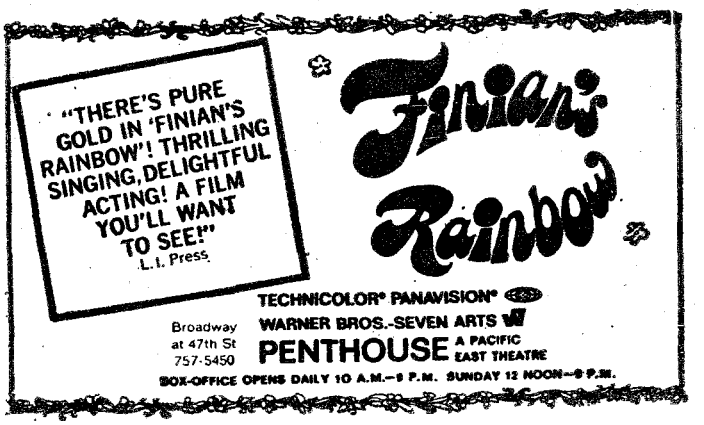
In many ways the book succeeds. It is generally accurate; and in view of the large amount of technical material Davis presents, this can only be the result of long and effective research. Not only the facts of scientific discovery are given. The author manages to convey as well the blind groping frequently involved in research. What is destined to be a commonplace concept, accessible to children, is an impenetrable mystery before it is realized by way of a search filled with high excitement, at the cost of entirely disproportionate amounts of physical and mental energy.

But the characterizations of both Lawrence and Oppenheimer are flat. The two eminent men possess few traits not related to their work or their eventual conflict; what motivates them remains obscure. What are the wellsprings of their ambition? What part of each man is sacrificed to science? The minor characters are even weaker. They have walk-on parts: when a suitable quotation is required they are trotted out to deliver their lines and then quickly yanked into the wings. Each is given a thumbnail characterization: Fermi is a childlike genius; Alvarez, this year's Nobel Prize winner, is mean and destructively ambitious. Teller might have made his entry as a Hungarian *csikos* wearing a black ten-gallon hat: he is clearly villainous and his arrival on the scene calls for loud booing from the matinee audience. Groves, the army general in charge of the Manhattan Project, is an all-powerful father figure; he must be in command, yet he is unsure of himself because he does not understand his scientists or his own limitations.

Davis sees Lawrence as a slow-witted driver of men. He is exceptionally hard-working and determined. Once he has his mind made up nothing will induce him to leave a problem. Yet he does not seem really to understand what he is about. Time after time his students, his colleagues, or just plain luck, pull him back from the abyss of a monstrous blunder. Politically, Lawrence is described as neutral, but his friends are ultraconservative. In sum, he is a dull foil for his predestined opponent.

On the other hand, Davis' Oppenheimer is a brooding saint, a man of unquestionable brilliance, the foremost American theoretical physicist of his time who is also a devoted student of the Indian holy books. It is this astonishing duality that so impresses the literary intellectual. A man who can live with equal ease with quantum mechanics and Eastern philosophy, two of the most abstruse subjects imaginable, must surely be an intellectual superman. Any faults of character must surely be due to an innocence of worldly ways, a kind of social virginity that goes well with theoretical physics and the Vedas. In only one instance is Oppenheimer criticized; when he agrees to drop the first bomb on Hiroshima instead of arranging a demonstration in Tokyo Bay. His motivation here is not made clear. Was he merely going along with Groves and the military, or did he decide that a drop on Hiroshima would, in the long run, not only save American as well as Japanese lives but would also provide the only credible demonstration to the world community of an apocalypse so terrible that nuclear weapons would never be used again?

Davis' judgment of Lawrence and Oppenheimer deserves some critical examination. How, after all, do we decide the merits of a person as a scientist, or as a human being? In Lawrence's case, Davis' view is only partly correct. If Lawrence had been as doltish as he is described, he could certainly never have collected and inspired so creative a group as his students and his collaborators. No one is a keener judge of the worth of a professor than a graduate student in search of a thesis. So many of them sought out Lawrence. But there are other measures of the man. He envisioned and realized a big physics laboratory. He knew that big machines demand a different style of research, and that only big machines can uncover the secrets of atomic nuclei and the ephemeral elementary particles that were yet to come. It is because of Lawrence, more than any other single scientist, that we now have large physics laboratories throughout the world, and that we have uncovered many awesome wonders of the subnuclear world. No one knows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where it will lead, but it began with Lawrence.

It is easier to rehabilitate Lawrence from Davis' account than it is to know Oppenheimer. Oppenheimer appears to have been more complicated than the saint that emerges from Davis' book. He had faults of character: the most evident was his disdainful and often insulting intolerance of people who were not his intellectual equals. Though he was a superb and brilliant leader of the bomb project, and could grasp ideas as quickly as they were uttered, his impact on the future of physics was much smaller than Lawrence's. His special gift was as a teacher of outstanding students. There was a period between 1928 and 1932 when he was the fountainhead of theoretical physics in this country. Still his own contributions to physics were not extraordinary. It must have galled Oppenheimer that his greatest achievement was administrative. His legacy to the world is not only the bomb but also Los Alamos. This superb laboratory remains, twenty-five years after its inception, a monument to Oppenheimer; his spirit still fructifies it.

The requirements of fictional history demand characters and situations of sharp conflict. Here Davis misleads the reader by stretching each incident to create an impression of impending conflict between Lawrence and Oppenheimer, or by sharpening technical disagreements into personal vendettas. He illuminates the nuclear scene with a sharp light where shadows deepen and high spots glow. The actual landscape was not nearly so dramatic. For example, in the race to separate U235 there was competition between the electromagnetic process (Lawrence), and the diffusion process (Dunning). But even in retrospect it seems like a good idea to have tried both in parallel. After all, nothing was known with certainty, urgency was extreme in the face of a possible German bomb, and both systems were in the end productive. How could one have predicted which of two unknown technological tours de force would be more efficient in the end? As a matter of fact this question was not finally settled in favor of the diffusion process until 1950, five years after the bomb. There were heated discussions undoubtedly among the leaders of the Manhattan Project, and frequent disagreements. But the sharp personal clashes and lasting antagonisms that grew out of them are heightened by Davis, one suspects, for dramatic impact, to enthrall the reader rather than to inform him.

Oppenheimer's trial is the crux of the book. It is gripping to read even after all these years. One feels something ancient and almost primeval in the tale of the celebration of a hero, his downfall, his disgrace amidst shouts of treason, and his eventual rehabilitation. The world may remember Oppenheimer with Pericles.

An interesting question is raised by Davis: why did the Eisenhower administration decide to pursue the Oppenheimer affair? He gives three fascinating possible answers. First, it might have been pure revenge on the part of Lewis Strauss, who was publicly ridiculed and humiliated by Oppenheimer before a Congressional committee. Second, the trial was really an effort to spare Oppenheimer a far worse fate at the hands of Joseph McCarthy. And third, Oppenheimer was victimized as the result of a visceral response on the part of a conservative Establishment angry because it was felt that the United States had lost the lead in thermonuclear weapons. But the reader must wait for another author, and another book, to explore this intriguing question.

Playacting Theatre Critic

THEATRE NOTEBOOK: 1947-1967. *By Jan Kott. Translated from the Polish by Boleslaw Taborski. Doubleday & Co. 268 pp. $5.95.*

HAROLD CLURMAN

Jan Kott is a theatre critic after my own heart. He discerns the play as a whole, the stage presentation as part of the total dramatic context. Still more important he believes that "a critic should first of all know, and sense, the points at which political and social events, tradition, history, and the present intersect with art. A critic's seat is actually located not in the third, or fifth, row of the orchestra, but in a public square." Beyond all this Kott is a personality. His *Theatre Notebook* ranges from the old and new theatre of Poland to Happenings in Edinburgh.

I began reading him with certain reservations, almost distrust. There is something in him of the intellectual playboy, an actor ready to assume any guise, perform any role. In these notebooks (a collection of little essays and reviews) as in his indispensable *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* I am inclined to refuse my whole assent not so much in regard to his opinions (most of which accord with mine) but in relation to his postures. He clowns a bit, plays the chameleon, flirts with too many divergent notions. I don't mean that he contradicts himself, which is inevitable and interesting, but that one suspects him at times, despite his erudition and common sense, of lacking seriousness.

For all that, in this, as in his earlier book, he ends by capturing me. He is lively: he seems to *create* the performance he describes. Theatregoing and writing about it is an adventure to him, a show in itself. It offers him the opportunity to do some of his own playacting. With the additional sparkle of the mirror he reflects what he sees on the stage. His appreciation of certain Polish actors (several of whom I have seen) makes one feel as if in the presence of those performers. He exaggerates—a common characteristic of effusive critics—but his exaggerations are rarely disortions because he is a keen observer.

Most of his pieces begin with a description of settings: not the settings of a play but of the town, the geographical, ethnic, social ambience in which the play has been seen. This is done with such relish, the traveler's delight in discovery, that one may fail to notice that the criticism of the play is sometimes hasty, summary and a little superficial. He will also choose a single trait in the event and make it appear to be the whole, trying to convince us, by piling one image or metaphor upon another, that what he has emphasized is nothing but the truth. This leads to a certain entrancing falsification.

The style is the man: it is extremely rapid, full of little leaps and bounds—always very clever—colorful flourishes, allusions to paintings and philosophies, bird's-eye views of places, hints of personal tastes in food or women. Thus some of what is said is soon forgotten; we do not come closer to the subject of inquiry but are rushed away from it. There is a brilliant levity in this which is perhaps light-minded. It is the reverse side of either a possible cynicism or pessimism, as if nothing were sufficiently important to be dwelt on. Kott is *theatrical* in both senses: exciting and slightly frivolous.

Yet my resistance always ends in enthusiasm. His very "errors" are illuminating: his "Shakespeare" is more paradox than profound, but it is salutary. To begin with, in his *Notebook* read the essay "Oedipus in Prose": it is first rate. In another piece he says: "In every performance of Greek tragedies that I have seen the Chorus has always been a disguised ballet"—which is why I prefer the handling of the Chorus in Schechner's *Dionysus in '69* to Cacoyannis' in *Iphigenia*. His formulations are often ex-

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tremely revealing: "In Poland even a strip-tease act may have ideological overtones." He tells us significantly that the Theatre of the Absurd in Poland may be labeled a "political grotesque."

He is "mainly interested in 'life' "—bravo!—which makes him superior to most theatre critics whose scope is no broader than the distance from the lobby to the typewriter. He began as a romantic youth, he was converted to Marxism; in contact with Paris, after the shock of Stalinism, he veered toward existentialism. Marks of all these influences are evident throughout his *Notebook*. These give his writing a tone if not always the weight of genuine substance.

He feels theatre in his every fiber; his senses stir. He is truly cultivated and generously informed. He possesses an alert mind, a cosmopolitan background, a canny spirit. We must follow him carefully to ascertain where he is merely being cute and where genuine. He is always arresting and fun; one of the finest theatre critics to be read in English.

Palefaces and Redskins

VIBRATIONS. *By David Amram. The Macmillan Co. 469 pp. $6.95.*

MUSIC AND PEOPLE. *By Ned Rorem. George Braziller. 250 pp. $5.95.*

RICHARD FREEDMAN
Mr. Freedman teaches at Simmons College. He has written for The Kenyon Review, Book World, Life *and* Saturday Review.

Philip Rahv's famous distinction between Palefaces and Redskins among American authors is equally valid for grouping our composers. Rorem and Amram, although they sound like some Dickensian law firm, are the most recent examples of Rahv's observation. Both are moderately young, moderately talented, but terribly American composers who feel a burning compulsion to express themselves in words as well as notes, perhaps because their notes have not attracted as much attention thus far as they could wish.

At this point, however, their paths diverge. Amram sings a wildly exuberant barbaric yawp about himself, while Rorem daintily places before our fastidious noses some scented petits fours—slim book reviews, reveries, diary entries. Sloppily written and ludicrously naive. Amram's book is nevertheless the more interesting.

Every other word is fabulous, terrific, fantastic or stunning. He can seriously—and with apparent approval—report a friend saying to him: "Groovissimo." Gleefully recounting the filming of *Pull My Daisy*, for which he wrote the score and in which he played the role of Mezz MacGillicuddy, he tells how Allen Ginsberg and Gregory Corso would "pour water on anybody that looked like they weren't interested." The hippie rape of the English language is complete here, although Amram modestly sees himself as too old to be a hippie and too young to be a guru.

Even though he is 37, he just digs being alive because "every heartbeat is a groove." As a swinging young Jewish farm boy out of Feasterville, Pa., he decided that "if I was going to be a composer I would have to learn something about composing." One wishes he had felt similar compunctions before becoming an author.

The result is a musical autobiography that reads like Berlioz's *Memoirs* as rewritten, or unwritten, by Jack Kerouac. But Berlioz was a great composer by the time he wrote his *Memoirs*, and the book is itself a work of literature. Amram, as he himself is all too aware, is known as "Mr. Background Music," largely for the evocative but slight scores he contributed to Joseph Papp's Shakespeare in the Park productions, and for some Hollywood films. He has more grandiose aspirations, and I hope they come to fruition, because despite the book's pretentiousness (it is exactly three times as long and self-important as it should be—don't they *edit* books any more?) he comes across as a disarming and engaging young man.

He has some good stories to tell, too. He played the French horn in the raffish Seventh Army Orchestra in Germany, a most unmilitary outfit in which "most of us looked like survivors of Valley Forge . . . with holes in our clothes, long hair, small beards, goatees, mustaches, frayed shirts, unshined shoes and corroded buttons." Standing at attention they made quite a spectacle, but did more than all the army's public relations men combined to convince Europeans that not all Americans were gum-chewing barbarians with cameras blopping against their bellies. Needless to say, the orchestra usually faced a cutoff of funds.

Excellent too, and most instructive about the financial status of the serious musician in this country, is an account of coming home to a rat-and-roach-infested sixth-floor Village walk-up after a prestigious musical triumph.

Amram is equally grounded in jazz and classical music and, as usual, jazz produces the worst writing. We get the obligatory eulogy of Charlie Parker, culminating in "Bird's" profound observation: "Man, doesn't Modigliani have a lot of soul?" Or, listening to Thelonius Monk, "you could feel that there was something in the music, no matter what it was." One expects musicians, like photographers, to be *idiots savants*, but sometimes Amram overdoes it.

Among his most beguiling eccentricities is his conviction that hate rays emanate toward him from conventional musicians, and even, on one occasion, "Queens Boulevard hate rays" from an agent's receptionist. On the whole, though, he tries to love everybody, gives exhaustive lists of musicians to whom he feels indebted, and even admires the plays of Arthur Miller and Paddy Chayevsky, which makes one wonder just how deeply he "digs" Shakespeare.

Because of this all-embracing, Whitmanesque attitude, he gets few hate rays but many good vibrations, not merely from his mellifluous French horn but from simpatico jazz musicians, and "heavenly, tinkling" ones from beautiful girls, all of whom get a "terrific, fabulous" build-up when they first make the scene, only to be quietly dropped a few pages later.

So much for our Redskin. Our Paleface, Ned Rorem, is the composer of vast numbers of respectable technically conservative art songs by whatever librettist, and of the opera *Miss Julie*, which was regarded by the critics as a losing battle with Strindberg, but which Rorem likes well enough to discuss its creation in infinite narcissistic detail.

He is perhaps best known for the gratuitous revelations of his love life in his *Paris Diary*, from which Gore Vidal, according to Rorem, plagiarized *Myra Breckenridge*. We get little of that here, for *Music and People* is essentially a collection of modish reviews which hardly warranted reprinting. The most famous review, of the Beatles, started the vogue for taking them seriously—a vogue of which Rorem himself is now heartily sick. He just thought they sounded "like a choir of male nymphets."

Rorem's affectations are a good deal less ingenuous than Amram's. His Paleface vocabulary specializes in words like melismatic, copraphagiac, vetivered, mal-

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adive, fructuous and connotate (fruitful and connote not being classy enough for him).

But "ignorance," as Lady Bracknell observes, "is like a delicate exotic fruit; touch it and the bloom is gone." She could be commenting on Rorem's description of a visit to Poulenc: "A few days later, as bread-and-butter gift, I left a rare and fragrant package of Hindu josh [*sic*] sticks (purchased the previous month near Tangier's Xoco Chico) with the concierge of Poulenc's Paris apartment." Did Bach carry on this way? All the epigraphs in the world from Nietzsche, Alice B. Toklas and Tom Lehrer can't redeem this sort of inaccurate chichi.

Nonsense and Erudition

THE BEST OF MYLES. *By Myles na Gopaleen. Walker & Co. 400 pp. $7.50.*

SEAN CRONIN

Mr. Cronin is a journalist who has lived in Ireland and the United States, and has written for publications in both countries.

Kevin O'Nolan died two years ago at the age of 54, having spent most of his working life as a civil servant in Dublin. He had two other identities. As Flann O'Brien he wrote the comic fantasies *At Swim-Two-Birds, The Hard Life, The Dalkey Archive, The Third Policeman.* The first is a minor masterpiece. "That's a real writer," said James Joyce on reading it, and critics have been echoing his remark in one form or another since. The others didn't measure up to it; except perhaps *The Third Policeman,* written in 1940 but not published here until last year (see Kevin Sullivan's review, *The Nation,* February 5).

To most Irish people the name Flann O'Brien was shadowy enough, but as Myles na Gopaleen he was famous. Myles was renowned because of his column in the *Irish Times* called "Cruiskeen Lawn," a satiric hash of droll tales, broad farce, literary puns, parodies and occasional pedantry. He enraged his readers as often as he amused them, and he kept it up—off and on—for twenty-seven years. In the process he pricked the bubble of many Irish illusions.

For Myles, words were a joy in any language, and he used them like a craftsman. He started the column in 1939 in Irish; he switched to English on alternate days, and eventually dropped Irish altogether. Sometimes he wrote in Latin and sometimes he invented a language as he went along. He also created a host of characters who were as well known to his readers as members of their own family. They knew the inside of pubs well, which was fitting since "Cruiskeen Lawn" means "full little jug," and the overflowing liquid usually is alcoholic. (There's a drinking song in Irish with that title. It might have been Myles's anthem.)

Myles on good days was a modern Swift come to judge and scourge the Yahoos in prose as plain as that of the Dean himself. On bad days he could be tiresome and preachy as an old parish priest sermonizing to peasants. Most of the time his material had the tangy flavor of a well-drawn pint of Guinness stout which, as everyone knows, works wonders on the brain and provides sustenance for the body. This selection is culled from his first five years when Myles was at his best. He grew gloomy with the years and no wonder.

In wartime, neutral Ireland, Myles had no shortage of targets for his shafts. His zaniness gave him a kind of safe passage through the Irish mine field. Rationing was tight, censorship strict, public transport slow, bureaucrats powerful, and politicians self-righteous as always. Myles took them all on. To show that he played no favorites, occasionally he turned on the editor of the *Irish Times* and his writers. His lists of dislikes included bores, clichés and "people who are very important and equally ignorant." Also paddywhackery and Irish writers with one eye on the British market in order to cash in on their "witty Celtic act" and "lovable playboy role" for the Saxon shilling.

He could be unfair too and as narrow as some of his victims. One of those he mocked was the playwright John M. Synge: ". . . he brought forward with the utmost solemnity amusing clowns talking a sub-language of their own and bade us take them very seriously." But the very next day Myles stormed into the breach for a Rouault painting, banished by order of the Dublin Municipal Gallery board of directors

Some of those Dublin topics of a quarter-century ago may make little sense to one unfamiliar with the time and place of writing. The editing might have been more helpful here; at the very least the dates of the columns should have been noted. All the same it's a fair compendium of Myles's nonsense and erudition, his wit and concern for language.

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ART

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

The first impression of the Francis Bacon exhibition (Marlborough-Gerson) is one of unaccustomed abundance; a painter once celebrated for a small output of dark paintings comes on now in rococo luxuriance. It is not merely that his productive capacity has increased; he seems always to have worked hard and long, but his impulse to self-censorship has relaxed. He now lets more work out of the studio. The formal basis of his art has undergone a radical shift, too. A majority of the new works are of several figures, or of one figure repeated, which amounts visually to the same thing, whereas all his best work before 1963 was one of the single human figure. Where there were more than one they were of homosexual pairs, at least temporarily *one* flesh. As the cast of his pictures has increased in number, the figures have correspondingly shrunk in relation to the size of the painting. (Something similar happened in the movies of the mid-fifties, when big screens brought middle shots forward to the place occupied by close-ups in small-screen movies.)

The majority of his works from 1945 to 1962 were of fairly large figures, filling the canvas in the way that a man fills a bed or a bathtub. The actual size of Bacon's paintings has not changed, only the proportion of the painted figures to the whole area. In earlier Bacon pieces

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the drama was in the confrontation of the image and the spectator; the violent or provocative nature of the image turned us, as we looked, into involuntary witnesses. (Early criticism of Bacon testifies to this power to implicate the observer, sliding his attention from "aesthetic contemplation" to guilty involvement.) In his work since 1962, however, Bacon has moved the drama from a relation between his image and the spectator to something enacted by several figures within the painting. The transition is, in effect, from being a kind of lyrical poet to a kind of dramatist, and he can't do it.

It is hard enough to formulate convincing relationships, human and social, among multiple figures in painting. To do so when they are distorted by the fusion of successive views in time is hazardously difficult. The new pictures end up looking like paralytic children enacting Racine, or Sartre's *No Exit* in the hands of Godard. This grotesque effect comes from Bacon's failure to control his groups as he controlled his single figures. In the new work, even the single figures are accompanied by excreted pets or sticky *mise-en-scène*. If Bacon could hold them together with the tough ease he brought to his work of the fifties, there would be no problem, but as the space has become scenic, the extended areas have become ornate and flabby.

The earlier work of Bacon depended on quotation and paraphrase. Sometimes he referred to specific paintings such as Velasquez's "Pope Innocent X" or Van Gogh's "The Road to Tarascon," but at all times he took the general stylistic character of the grand manner, his adaptations of which retained its formal grandeur while he modified it in terms of his own irony or anxiety. This formal infrastructure has been abandoned in the new group and in its absence Bacon's work flies apart. He lacks the capacity to invent coherent spatial structures for the complex and relational action of figure groups. The new work, for all its handsome color, is short-winded and fragmentary.

It is a curious fact of present-day painting that single figures or crowds seem to have been fairly easy to paint. Precisely related groups of figures in an articulated environment, on the other hand, are harder to handle. The painterly resources of modern art can accommodate easily either the one or the many; paint takes only a little persuading to be a body (swarming paint marks inside a simple contour) or a horde (every brush mark is a member of the mob). To be precise about a few figures, however, is awkward. It is to Bacon's credit that he is putting his whole effort to the problem, but disappointing that the result to date is so far below what he has shown himself able to do.

Robert Rauschenberg's "Soundings" was installed at the Museum of Modern Art after being shown at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam—a nice case of prompt international communications. And the problem to which the work contributes is one that interests artists in both Europe and the United States: spectator participation. "Soundings" is a 36-feet-long relief, with a mirror surface, reflecting grayly the spectators; at sound cues from the spectators, lights behind the mirror are activated. As these flash, the mirror is seen to be one-way glass, and printed images of chairs, big and small, every which way, can be glimpsed. The sounds which trigger this activity are picked up by mikes suspended over the viewing zone, out in front of the mirror wall.

It must be admitted that the installation at the Modern is not a help. "Soundings" is displayed in a rather secluded spot, which means that there are almost no accidental animations from casual passers-by. Also the area is carpeted, which reduces the sounds considerably. If the machine were more sensitive, carpeting might be necessary to prevent an orgy of perpetual flickering; as it is, however, the general impression of the wall is dim and withdrawn, like a storage attic seen by summer lightning. Only a fairly high and persistent noise level can induce anything but brief flashes, the lights being cued to one-to-one responses, so that one clap of the hands is rewarded by a momentary sight of chair silhouettes that obliterate the spectators in their watchful poses. Hence, the zone for viewing is usually full of people snapping their fingers, clapping their hands, whistling, to make the inert wall do something, and to make it do more.

The rate of change is central to works of art that offer physical options. If the shifts are too fast, or unstoppable, the spectator soon learns he is excluded and the movement of the works becomes as fascinating as an on-off neon sign. If the changes are too slow or too slight, the spectator is forced to clear his throat repeatedly or keep kicking the wall, as visitors to the Modern kept doing. The one-way glass and the layers of plexiglass on which the chair images are printed, reduced the too quick lights to a dim as well as a perfunctory display. There was no jackpot, at which the random flickerings suddenly shone forth in unison; the whole thing was muted and grudging. Understandably, Rauschenberg stayed away from the discothèque spectacles, but all he presented instead was huge, indirect and cumbersome, reproductions of the effects he gets easily and directly in his lithographs. The grainy image, overlapping forms and low-keyed monochrome are characteristic of his later graphics, a bunch of which showed with "Soundings."

Physical participation is not automatically more fun or more rewarding than the attention given to static works of art. In fact, the function of attention has been reduced in "Soundings" to a few bare options. Instead of the chance of experiencing Rauschenberg's work freely, in terms of "random order" (the artist's own term for his organizational sense), the spectator's participative role is a drag. You stand there and get less new information than from a distorting mirror at a carnival. It is as if we were to prize landscapes with echoes as more "participatory" than silent landscapes.

FILMS

ROBERT HATCH

You can see why Twentieth Century Fox dumped *Pretty Poison* straight into the neighborhood houses, with no downtown openings. It has Tony Perkins playing a nut again, it is about the kinks of youth, and it is directed by an unknown young American named Noel Black (unknown young European directors make good box office, but in the American film business you are supposed to arrive famous). And you can see why the reviewers, in a bleak season of commercial art nouveau and permuting sex, hauled *Pretty Poison* out of popcorn oblivion and sent it on the art-house circuit.

It is rather awful to look at, being made in that hyper-chromatic, triple-varnished technicolor that transforms the carefully selected, very specific New England setting (Great Barrington) into a full-color daily special on the Howard Johnson menu. I swear I wouldn't recognize my own street corner if they brought it on tarted up that way. Also, the creators of this film (Lorenzo Semple, Jr., wrote the screenplay from a novel by Stephen Geller) are so struck by the sardonic viewpoint and mordant humor of their own work that they repeat and underline as though instructing an audience of dropouts. Still, the film does have a viewpoint and its laughs do come where least appropriate; so that in an arid season of "Like, man, let's strip" it was worth its rescue. Plus, it is blessed with a genuinely jarring story.

So blessed, in fact, that I must be circumspect in discussing the events, not to spoil the fun. The trouble with the boy (Perkins) is that he embellishes his day dreams with just a little more real substance that most of us would care to

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attempt. Also, that he is not really as adroit—or as ruthless—as he enjoys pretending (though in fact quite bright). Thus if he imagines burning down the house of an offending relative, he will light a small fire in the basement, to bolster his fancy—and then watch in dismay as the whole place goes up, with the offender in the heart of the bonfire.

This sort of thing has landed him in a state institution, from which he is being released as the picture opens, to the parting words of his parole officer that "out there" he will find no tolerance for fantasy. The next thing Perkins—or we—see is Tuesday Weld leading a high school girls' rifle team in acrobatic maneuvers on a riverside meadow. That sort of juxtaposition gives *Pretty Poison* its tone.

Perkins has meanwhile been hired by one of those specialty chemical firms that have fitted themselves into abandoned New England spinning mills as hermit crabs take over snail shells. Like most of its kind, the plant is polluting air and water, and Perkins fancies himself a government man casing the infractions (the little bit of verisimilitude here is that he collects evidence with a real miniature camera). Then he meets Miss Weld, playing the ideal small-town girl who drives a sports car, lives on a ptomaine diet and preoccupies herself with the love life of her widowed mother. To impress her, and with seduction on his mind, Perkins begins acting and talking like a TV secret agent. Only a crazy kid could fall for such mumbo jumbo, but the fact is—well, the fact is what makes the story, produces much of the humor and a good deal of the terror. But the terror builds also because Perkins, who knows some of the truth about himself and his surroundings, goes down under the fist of society that understands nothing about him or itself. There is a palliating final episode, involving the parole officer, but it looked to me like a slight loss of nerve in the home stretch. Unrelieved pessimism as to the health of the nation is bad for business and probably un-American.

. . *Pretty Poison* offers a good deal of cold violence, material which is these days out of favor with the enlightened, but it seemed to me violence for comment, not for kicks. Perkins and Miss Weld perform well—they are handsome and expressive, but a little spastic and as though on strings. The style fits their individual parts and the milieu from which they are misbegotten.

The Beatles' *Yellow Submarine* is doubtless studded with "in" references which I don't get. One that has been pointed out to me (and which the Beatles deny) is to LSD in the song title, "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds." Another reference that I discovered for myself is to the graphics of Saul Steinberg. What with the pointing finger; the preoccupation with vanishing points and the anomalies of time, space and mathematics; the deployment of words in block letters—NOW, O.K., LOVE—as architectural elements; the cut-out mannikin figures set in a linear context; the prominence of a ziggurat; the affection for parades of replicated figures, and the magic proliferation of Rousseau-like foliage, the visual excellence of this animated movie owes a great deal to the basic furniture of Steinberg's elegant fantasy. I did not see his name among the screen credits and consider that a failure of candor by the film's proprietors.

What do take up a major share of the very long credits are the lists, arranged in squads and platoons, of the animators. These technicians, anonymous by reason of their numbers, have produced something novel, if not exactly new, in their rigorous trade. They combine the simulation of self-generated motion, customary in screen cartoons, with the shifting of scene blocks and character units by unseen hands, as though in one of those miniature cardboard theatres that delighted Victorian nurseries. This ambiguity of style sets up a visual tension which, along with the inventive absurdity of some of the Breughel-like fauna, keeps the film lively during most of its not great length, and which accords with the somewhat ambiguous benevolence of the Beatles themselves.

The representations of John, Paul, George and Ringo are, I presume deliberately, such wooden approximations that they seem more remote than they would be if present only on the sound track. Their Liverpool accent, with the depreciating, dead-pan fall of the sentence rhythms, is the most ingratiating entertainment voice since the Scots of Sir Harry Lauder. And it serves the same purpose of authenticating some very dubious material. The Beatles are sometimes witty; when they are not, their accents are witty for them.

Yellow Submarine is essentially a framework for a dozen or so of the Beatles' songs, and like most musical revues its story line is its least important element. When the plot does intrude, it is distressingly cute in the manner of false naïveté; the children around me in the audience screamed with pleasure at these giggly goings-on, which increased my doubts as to the alleged innate good taste of the very young. What makes the picture go are a sound track that pours exuberance out of an electronic cornucopia, and the visual instruction of Saul Steinberg, who is never cute.

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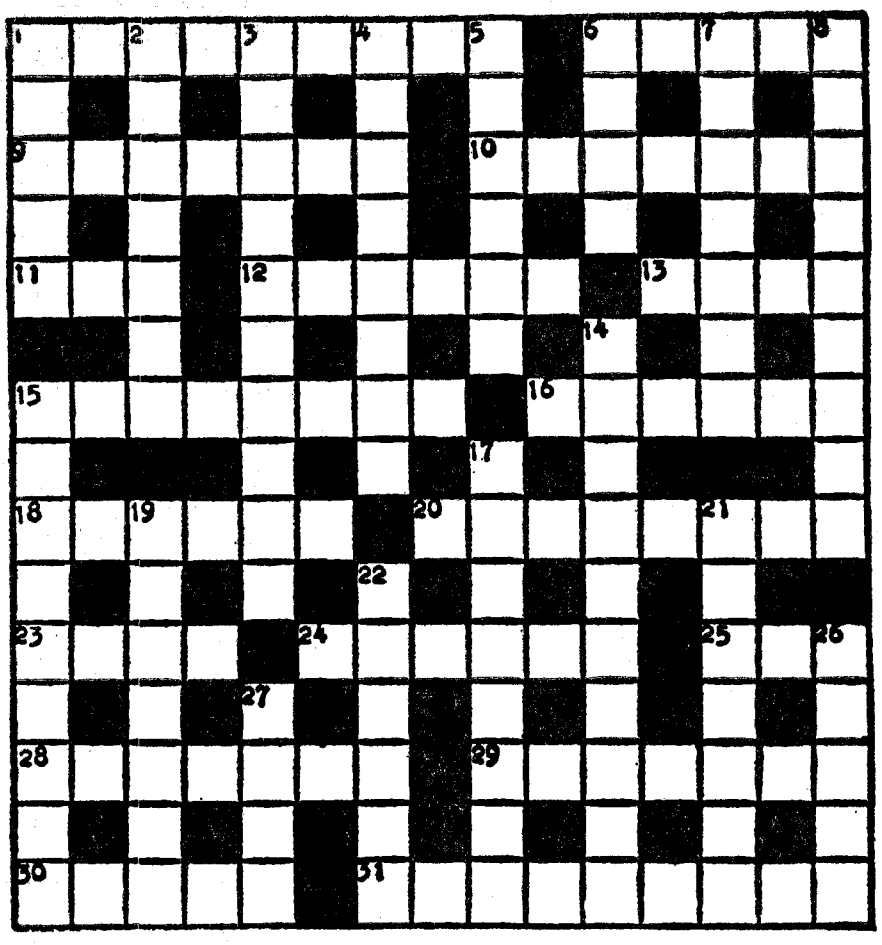

ACROSS

1 and 18 across Happy alternative, where everything goes to the plunger. (3,3,3,6)
6 Bovine, not of a higher order. (5)
9 It's bad to stare, as one who takes his turn does. (7)
10 The last thing to expect in some crimes!
11 Fight bare-back? (3)
12 Subjects composed by Siegel. (6)
13 In a different case, she precedes a goddess. (4)
16 More than one heavy wind blows up this way! (6)
23 Bird of 31. (4)
24 We and 10 set out to get money. (6)
25 The whole tree, or a stick of it? (3)
28 Away at the beginning, understands as Burns might say, what a rousing type does. (7)
29 Where there might have been a tilt without a real tip. (7)
30 Passing sound? (5)
31 Rents were brought into line for one coming from places that were thought of as being wide open. (9)

DOWN

1 Is 11 confused with the alternative, as an old implement of 11? (5)
2 "All rite!," or as you might put it, "exactly so!" (7)
3 Are 7 by the heavies? (10)
4 Left us at some trouble to become suitable to sensibilities. (8)
5 A tree's naturally bursting out in time of spring. (6)
6 A settlement for such as Francis Lightfoot and Robert Edward? (4)
7 Heaves and tosses between the light and the middle. (7)
8 Listens in the authentic environment in getting ready for play. (9)
14 City area with just one building on it? It might be a strong point. (10)
15 Gobble gabble? (5,4)
17 A noisy blow-out to you and me? It's an inspiration! (8)
19 The fleet might be so measured, with no agent involved. (7)
21 What one might have to turn before playing, if electric, according to the rules. (7)
22 Observe both present and past recreation for some. (6)
26 The urban leader might otherwise make it. (5)
27, 15 across and 20 What the author of "Drop-out Stories" does? (4,5,3,2,6)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1274

ACROSS: 1 Surinam; 5 and 4 down Ancient Mariner; 9 Learner; 10 Trestle; 11 Icily; 12, 15, 17 and 27 across Norman Conquest; 14 and 13 Steamer trunk; 16 Excited; 18 Spinner; 21 Linseed; 24 Ascot; 28 Pension; 29 Reefers; 30 Needles; 31 Denoted. DOWN: 1 Sallies; 2 Realize; 3 Nancy; 5 Astarte; 6 Chest; 7 Entrust; 8 Trekked; 18 Sharpen; 19 Incense; 20 Remands; 21 Labored; 22 Everest; 23 Detests; 25 Trial; 27 and 26 Queen Mab.

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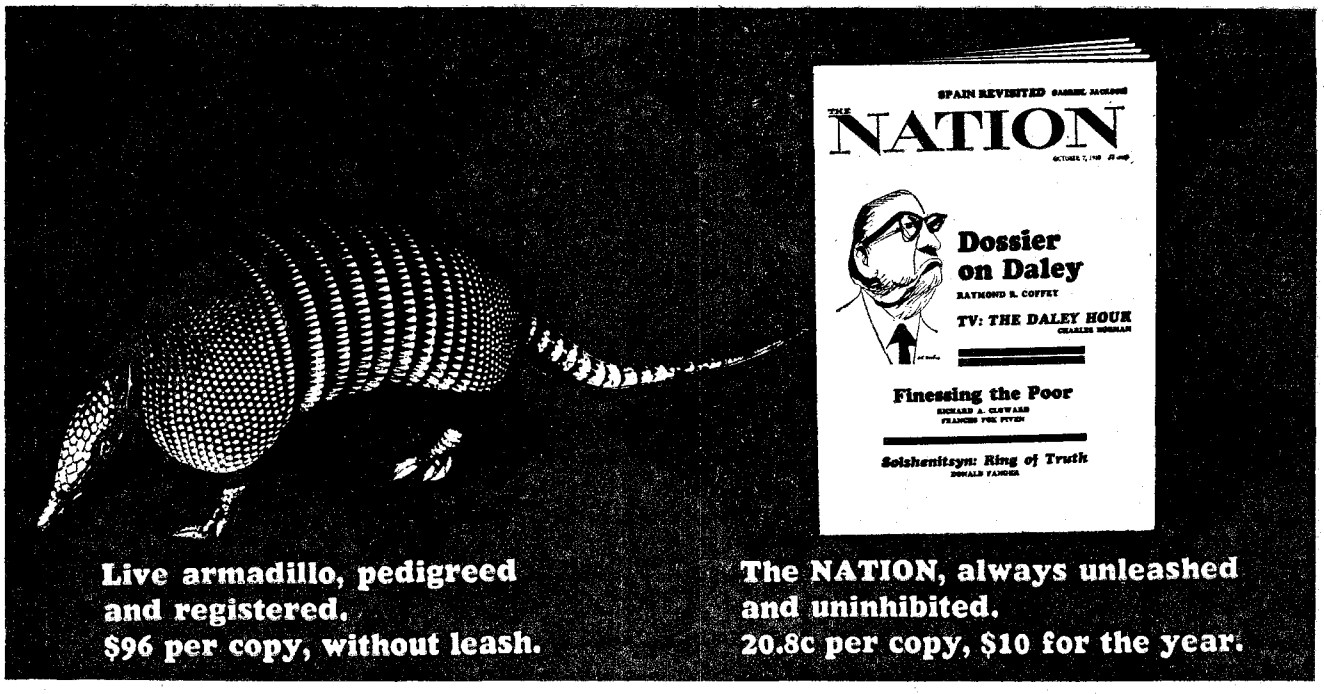
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